DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN THE MEDIA BATTLESPACE:
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Strategy

by

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In Operation Iraqi Freedom, various insurgent and terrorist groups have demonstrated the capability to use small, relatively insignificant tactical attacks to have a dramatic effect on the will of the American public to prosecute the war. This thesis investigates this enemy capability, the media system in which it operates, and the ability of the US military to combat this capability. It finds that the enemy operates at the event and collection level of the media system, producing pictures and data, generating events, and controlling access to influence news stories about the operational area. It also finds that the current method of media coverage in Iraq is the result of reporters, stringers, and media outlets, driven by their respective interests, arriving at the solution that strikes the best balance between cost, entertainment, and accuracy. This thesis finds that doctrinal separations exist between information operations and public affairs, that media is not seen as an operational problem, and that there are extra-doctrinal and cultural impediments to facilitating the media. This thesis recommends remedies, including facilitating media outlet operation?s in the operational area, facilitating reporters? coverage of the war, and reforming the role of public affairs in joint operations.

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ABSTRACT

DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN THE MEDIA BATTLESPACE: OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, by MAJ Patrick E. Proctor, 118 pages.

In Operation Iraqi Freedom, various insurgent and terrorist groups have demonstrated the capability to use small, relatively insignificant tactical attacks to have a dramatic effect on the will of the American public to prosecute the war. This thesis investigates this enemy capability, the media system in which it operates, and the ability of the US military to combat this capability. It finds that the enemy operates at the event and collection level of the media system, producing pictures and data, generating events, and controlling access to influence news stories about the operational area. It also finds that the current method of media coverage in Iraq is the result of reporters, stringers, and media outlets, driven by their respective interests, arriving at the solution that strikes the best balance between cost, entertainment, and accuracy. This thesis finds that doctrinal separations exist between information operations and public affairs, that media is not seen as an operational problem, and that there are extra-doctrinal and cultural impediments to facilitating the media. This thesis recommends remedies, including facilitating media outlet operation's in the operational area, facilitating reporters' coverage of the war, and reforming the role of public affairs in joint operations.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Clausewitz, in *On War*, described war as "an object suspended between three magnets": policy (which lies mostly in the sphere of influence of government), passion (in the realm of the people), and chance (the domain of the military). Any attempt to describe war without considering all three elements of this "paradoxical trinity" was, in Clausewitz's view, doomed to failure (Clausewitz 1976, 89).

In a representative republican government, the interaction between these three elements is as important as the influence they each, individually, have on the phenomenon of war. Democracy provides a mechanism by which "the people" can directly influence the direction of "the government." This is the reality of American national strategy: it must reflect the will of the American people.

The American military, the third element of this trinity, was safely insulated from "the people" at its inception. It was insulated by the geographical separation between distant battlefields and the American public. It was also insulated by "the government," from which it took, and still takes, direction. While national security strategy was created by the government, representative of the will of the people, tactical and operational decisions were still made by the military, relatively independent of public opinion.

Now, however, a revolutionary reshaping of this interaction between the people and "the military" has taken place. The advent of 24-hour, global, electronic media, connects the people to the actions of their military in a way that has never existed before. As a result the tactical and operational decisions of the military are, like never before,

subject to the scrutiny of the people. Since the people have a powerful influence on their government, which in turn commands the military, operational and even tactical actions can now have a powerful impact on national strategy, limiting the military's freedom of action in achieving national strategic objectives.

Significance of the Study

In an opinion piece he wrote for the *Los Angeles Times*, Donald Rumsfeld summarized the problem well.

> Our enemies have skillfully adapted to fighting wars in today's media age, but for the most part we--our government, the media or our society in general--have not. Consider that violent extremists have established "media relations committees" and have proved to be highly successful at manipulating opinion elites. They plan and design their headline-grabbing attacks using every means of communication to break the collective will of free people. (Rumsfeld 2006)

He goes on to describe the US government's efforts to win the war of public opinion as "a five-and-dime store in an EBay world" (Rumsfeld 2006).

If one accepts the premise that the US military is a subset of the US government, one must conclude that this observation applies to the US military as well. This conclusion is supported by the perspective from which Secretary Rumsfeld speaks, as the Secretary of Defense. It is his observation that America's enemies are very good at using the media to further their aims and the US military is, conversely, not.

In the Global War on Terror, America's enemies have found an efficient way to strike directly at the heart of what Clausewitz called the "passions" of the people. With relatively small, tactical attacks, and effective use of the global media, they can shake the resolve of the American people, and limit the options of the US government in prosecuting the war. To this same end, they are even capable of using the media to reflect

the actions of the US military in a negative light. The US government in general and military in particular has found no effective way to counter this capability of the enemy and to preserve the will of the American people. As American public opinion is a key factor in setting national strategy, failure to defeat this enemy capability, over time, could well unravel America's efforts to defeat global terrorism.

Assumptions and Limitations

Underlying any discussion of the interaction between the public (e.g., the people in Clausewitz's trinity) and the political leadership of the nation (e.g., the government), and how the media impacts that relationship, are a few fundamental assumptions which are not, necessarily, empirically provable. These assumptions stem from the limitations on the ability to prove or demonstrate elements of the human psyche. Strategy and its resultant operational designs are formulated by human beings, operating in human societies and cultures. Ultimately, it is impossible to "prove" that a person made a decision in a certain way because of certain factors, or that a person feels a certain way about an issue.

Thus, the first assumption is that the media has an impact on public opinion. While this may seem intuitively true, there has been no conclusive research done in this area. A primary source of difficulty is that it is very difficult to objectively define whether a news story or article about an event is "negative" or "positive." Any empirical data based on such a subjective analysis would be inherently flawed. This assumption is critical, as the premise of this thesis is that, by affecting media coverage of military operations, the US military can affect public opinion.

The second assumption of this thesis is that public opinion is reflected accurately by opinion polls. Modern polling agencies, such as Zogby International and the Gallup Organization, take great pains to weight and balance polls in order to accurately reflect the demographic they are polling. But there is no way to guarantee that respondents in a poll are answering honestly, reflecting their true opinions about a poll question. There has been considerable debate on this topic. For example, on controversial questions with moral overtones, such as questions about race or religion, do people answer in a way they perceive to be right in relation to cultural norms, rather than in a way that reflects their true feelings?

Since the polling topics examined in this thesis will be more secular in nature, concerning international and military matters about which people are at least somewhat less emotional (e.g., more "detached"), it is probably safe to assume they reflect "true" public opinion accurately. The assumption is really *required* in order to further study the research questions. One must accept polling data as an accurate reflection of public opinion if he is to gauge the effect of media coverage, over time, *on* public opinion.

The final assumption made in formulating this thesis is that the political leadership of the US is influenced by the opinion of the American people. There is quite a bit of circumstantial evidence for this. First, there is the massive amount of polling that occurs on political topics. Why would the opinion of the public be important if it did not inform politicians in making decisions? Why would politicians avoid or deemphasize unpopular stances if they were not concerned about public opinion?

In politics, however, it is important that the politician not *appear* to be swayed by opinion polls. It is a common refrain of the politician that he leads "by conviction rather

than by polls." It is this very facet of American politics which makes it impossible to draw a direct linkage between a public opinion poll and a stance, vote, or action taken by a politician. Put another way, it is impossible to *prove* that political decisions are made in response to polls, even if one knows it, intuitively, to be true.

However, one must make the assumption that this linkage exists, in order to accept the premise that the loss of public support for military operations can doom them to failure (since the political leadership of the US--the government in Clausewitz' trinity--directs the US military).

It is interesting to note that, if this final assumption is, in fact, correct, it renders the second assumption (that public opinion polls accurately reflect public opinion) less important. It is only important that the political leadership of the US *believe* that polls are accurate. It is not the actual, individual opinion of each American that drives political decisions, but the "collective will" of the American people. The real question of the first assumption then becomes, does the media influence public opinion polls? Even more reductively, one could ask, does the media influence political decision makers? To either of these questions, one must answer, yes, in order to proceed with an investigation of the research questions.

<u>Delimitations</u>

The history of the interaction between the US military and the American media is at least as old as both institutions. Since the objective of this thesis is to examine the US military's *current* capabilities and doctrine, the research will focus on the Global War on Terror. It is not necessarily productive to explore further into the past because of the nature of the modern media. The last decade has seen an explosion of information and

communications technology. Modern media bears little resemblance, in content, quantity, or methods to that which existed in Vietnam, which makes an examination of this conflict tangential to an examination of the modern media. Grenada, Panama, and the Gulf War were too short in duration to have extensive applicability to contemporary operations, and conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo lacked the scale and complexity of current operations in the Global War on Terror.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has called the Global War on Terror "the long war" (Scarborough 2006). It could also, rightly, be called "the big war." The Global War on Terror spans five continents, involves dozens of coalition partners, and exercises every element of national power. Even a study focused only on the media in relation to the military component of the total war would be nebulous. Since this thesis will focus on the operational level of war and, specifically, on US military capability and doctrine for operational planning and execution, this study will examine one operational theater, Operation Iraqi Freedom.

It is not the goal of this study to second-guess or criticize the prosecution of Operation Iraqi Freedom, or any on-going military operation. This thesis is an examination of current US military doctrine and how it guided the design of Operation Iraqi Freedom. While this research will examine decisions made in planning and executing Operation Iraqi Freedom, the emphasis must and will be on how those decisions were guided by doctrine and on what changes, if any, need to be made to US military doctrine, as it applies to military-media relations at the operational level.

The final delimitation is on methods and techniques in military-media interaction that will be examined. A wealth of historical evidence (all beyond the scope of this study)

indicates that lying to or intentionally deceiving the American media is ultimately counterproductive as a technique. Both Department of Defense policy and US federal law prohibit the US military from using PSYOPS (psychological operations) or IO (information operations) to target the American public (Department of Defense, *IO Roadmap*, 2003, 26). This study will not investigate or advocate any such techniques.

Likewise, there is a wealth of historical evidence (again, beyond the scope of this study) that indicates that it is fruitless to try to hide or cover-up information from the American media. News organizations, by their design, are investigative. History suggests that such attempts simply attract attention to that which one wishes to conceal. This thesis will not investigate such techniques as it appears such investigation will not be useful.

Rather, the research in this study will focus on how operational design, facilitates media coverage of military operations. The study will seek to grade existing techniques as to how well they defend American public opinion against the enemy's capability to manipulate the media and attack the public's will. If this study finds operational planning and execution techniques that are more successful in this aim and finds that these techniques are not being used, research will then focus on how to routinely make use of these techniques, via revisions to US military doctrine.

Finally, this thesis represents nearly a year's research. However, in order to facilitate consistency between cited sources, information published after 30 September 2006 will not be considered in this study.

<u>Definitions</u>

Delimiting the research for this study allows better definition of a few key elements of the problem that this thesis will address. The first, perhaps most difficult to

define term is "the enemy." In fact, the American military continues to grapple with this question today. For the purposes of this thesis, the enemy will be defined as follows.

The Enemy: Nonstate actors, including (but not limited to) Al Qaeda in Iraq, former Saddam Hussein loyalists (e.g., "Baathists"), and Sunni extremists, whose goal is the expulsion of the US military from Iraq, and whose primary tactic is terrorism and small-scale attacks executed inside Iraq, *but targeted to impact (directly or indirectly) the will of the American people.*

The enemies of the US military in Iraq are legion. They range from those defined above, to those who simply want to exert primary influence over small regions of Iraq for material or political gain. It is reasonable to limit the examination to the enemy defined above because this is the element which has chosen as its tactic the exploitation of the media to attack the will of the American people to prosecute the war in Iraq. It is this enemy capability that this thesis will investigate.

Before moving on, it is useful to highlight the distinction made in the italicized portion of the definition above. There are many nonstate actors in Iraq who use terrorism and small-scale attacks in order to intimidate the Iraqi people for various reasons. This thesis will focus study, however, on those nonstate actors who commit acts intended to negatively impact the will of the American people.

The next important definition is that of "the media." The explosion of information technology over the past two decades has dramatically changed how the American people are informed and entertained. The remainder of this thesis will do much more to better define the media, but it is important to make some delimitation initially.

Since this thesis is focused on how, through operational art, the military might influence public opinion about military operations, it makes sense to limit the investigation of the media to those media outlets that inform the public about military operations. At this point, it is not important to focus on the size of the media outlet (whether it is a global, multimedia news network or an individual with a "Blog" website). It is also not important to focus, yet, on the means of delivery (radio, television, internet, print, etc.). However, as part of the investigation in the remainder of this thesis, since the goal is to identify methods to effectively influence public opinion, research will identify the media outlets that reach and inform the opinions of the most people. Research will then focus on the methods that are most effective in impacting those outlets.

Throughout this thesis, the phrases, public opinion, public will, support of the American populace, will of the American people, and other, similar phrases, are used interchangeably. Any student of American politics would rightly point out that the American public is not "of one mind" about anything, so it is important, in the interest of narrowing the scope of the investigation, that this concept be defined as it applies to this study.

For the purpose of this thesis, "public will" (and all of its associated, similar terms described above) is defined as follows.

Public Will: The opinion of citizens of the US, as expressed in public opinion polls, with respect to the questions such as,

1. Should the US continue to engage in the war in Iraq?

2. Is the war in Iraq "worth it" (e.g., does the potential strategic benefit for the US outweigh the cost in lives and resources)?

This definition presupposes that opinion polls accurately reflect public opinion. As stated earlier, one must make this fundamental assumption in order to proceed with this investigation.

Another brief but important definition is required. As stated in "Delimitations," above, research in this thesis will focus on US military operations in Iraq. As such, the terms "US military" and "American military," used throughout this thesis, refer to the US military *in the Iraqi theater of operations*. This includes the entire operational area, encompassing Iraq and all of the neighboring countries from which the US conducts Operation Iraqi Freedom.

With these terms defined, it is possible to discuss some of the key doctrinal concepts that will be discussed in this thesis and how they apply to the research questions.

The FM 3-0, *Operations*, June 2001, defines the term, "center of gravity" as follows.

> Center of Gravity. Centers of gravity are those characteristics, capabilities, or localities from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight. Destruction or neutralization of the enemy center of gravity is the most direct path to victory. The enemy will recognize and shield his center of gravity. Therefore, a direct approach may be costly and sometimes futile. Commanders examine many approaches, direct and indirect, to the enemy center of gravity. (5-7)

Perhaps it is not surprising, in these fluid times, that there is some disagreement, even on such a fundamental term. Currently in its "revision second draft" (RSD) format, the JP 3-0 RSD, *Joint Operations*, defines the center of gravity as follows.

> Center of Gravity. A characteristic, capability, or source of power from which a system derives its freedom of action, physical and moral strength, or will to act. Also called COGs. (2005, GL-8)

With some combination of these two definitions, it is possible to put the problem in doctrinal terms. First, the enemy has identified that the center of gravity for US military forces in Iraq is the support of the American populace for continued military operations there and has found an effective way to indirectly attack that center of gravity. Second, as of now, the US has not found an effective way to "defend," or, as the first definition above puts it, "shield," this center of gravity.

However, with contention over what a center of gravity even *is*, this begs the question of whether the will of the American people *is*, in fact, a center of gravity for the US military, and whether it is a strategic or operational center of gravity. This is important because it is the goal of this thesis, if necessary, to identify changes to *operational* doctrine to combat the enemy's media-manipulation capability. If the will of the people is *not* an operational center of gravity for the US military, then any such exploration may prove fruitless. Thus, answering this question is a prerequisite to answering the primary research question and is identified as a secondary question below. This question will not be examined further here.

One final term will be defined here. The FM 1-02, *Operational Terms and Graphics*, September 2004, defines doctrine as follows.

> Doctrine**.** (DOD) Fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application. (NATO) Fundamental principles by which the military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application. (1-65)

This leads one directly to the primary research question.

Primary Question: Is US joint, operational-level doctrine currently sufficient to, when exercised, neutralize the enemy's ability to use the media to erode the will of the American people (e.g., "defend" the US military's operational center of gravity)?

In order to answer this primary question, one must first answer a few others. First, one must understand the nature of the enemy's capability, and the extent of the threat it poses.

Secondary Question: What is the enemy capability?

Tertiary Question: Does the enemy have the ability to exploit world media to attack the American public's will to prosecute war?

Tertiary Question: What is the mechanism by which the enemy's tactical attacks are translated into changes in public opinion through the media?

Tertiary Question: Does this enemy capability threaten to prevent the US from achieving its strategic objectives in Iraq (e.g., is the will of the American people an operational center of gravity for the American military)?

After the enemy capability is understood, it is important to understand the media system, as it exists in Iraq, and why it is the way it is.

Secondary Question: What is the media system in Iraq?

Tertiary Question: How does the media currently cover the war in Iraq?

Tertiary Question: How has the media arrived at this solution? (Research will focus on how operational design has impacted this current state of affairs.)

It is next important to determine that the problem is, in fact, one of doctrine, rather than capabilities. To do this, one must demonstrate that the US military has had isolated successes in combating this enemy capability. Thus, another research question is:

Secondary Question: What is US military capability and doctrine for countering the enemy's capability?

Tertiary Question: Does the US military have the capability to defeat this enemy capability?

If it can be demonstrated that the capability already exists within the American military to combat the enemy's ability to attack the US public opinion, it is next necessary to identify why the US military is not habitually using that capability.

Tertiary Question: What is the current doctrine on military-media relations, information operations, and public affairs operations?

With these questions answered, it will, finally, be possible to answer the primary research question. Should the answer be, "no," (joint doctrine is not sufficient) this study will conclude by suggesting changes to operational doctrine to implement successful techniques for defeating this enemy capability.

<center>Contributions of This Thesis</center>

As the next chapter, "Literature Review," will show, there is no body of work on the enemy's ability to exploit the global media to further his aims. Also, no one has looked at the current doctrine from a "defensive" perspective. As such, previous works have not addressed the research questions in this thesis.

This thesis fills these "gaps" with an exhaustive examination of: (1) how the enemy is shaping the media and (2) how the US military can counteract his efforts (e.g.,

"defend" its center of gravity). With these additional "puzzle pieces," it should be

possible to arrive at an answer to the primary research question, and if necessary, suggest

substantive changes to US doctrine on media-military relations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of all of the research work in the area of modern military-media relations exposes two big "gaps" in the current state of study. First, there is no body of work on the enemy's ability to exploit the global media to further his aims. A review of the research shows that no one has looked at the media "through the eyes" of the enemy.

Second, no one has looked at the current doctrine from the perspective of "defending" the US military's vulnerable center of gravity: public opinion. Doctrinal recommendations to date have been focused on improving public perception of military operations. However, they seem focused on the vague goal of "informing the public." They do not account for the fact that there are actors who are actively trying to thwart the US military's efforts, deliberately trying to shape public opinion in a configuration opposed to that which the US military desires.

Research in the area of military-media relations, to date, has been limited to research projects, theses, and monographs. As of this writing, there have been no books written on the questions investigated in this thesis. While many books of tangential interest do exist, and will be referenced heavily in this study, the actual, stated questions of this thesis have yet to be directly addressed in book form.

The consensus seems to be "no," though, as stated above, no researcher has really looked at the primary question of this thesis in terms an enemy that actively seeks to counteract the US military's media-influencing efforts.

The Advanced Military Science Program (AMSP) monograph "Towards a More Productive Military-Media Relationship" (English 2005) comes closest to answering the primary research question. It focuses on integrating media considerations into planning and preparation in addition to the execution of military operations. It includes a brief review of the doctrine and history, focusing on the tactical challenges of media. It even suggests doctrinal changes to the current joint doctrine on public affairs. However, its suggested changes are less revolutionary and more evolutionary in nature. And, again, the recommended changes fail to address the problem of an active, thinking enemy who seeks to counteract US military efforts.

Tina S. Kracke, in her AMSP monograph, "Mass Media: The Ether Pervading the Clausewitzian Trinity" (2005) explores various mental models for describing the impact of 24-hour global media on national strategy. She also examines Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's "Propaganda Model," from *Manufacturing Consent* and explores it in the light of the new global media. She finally posits several solutions to exploit this new framework, though they focus more on fixing existing systems rather than rethinking the doctrine of military operations.

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Secondary Question: What is the enemy capability?

Tertiary Question: Does the enemy have the ability to exploit world media to attack the American public's will to prosecute the war?

As stated earlier, there is no definitive body of work on the enemy's ability to exploit the global media to further his aims. All of the research to date has focused on the success or failure of *US military* efforts to influence the media, and by extension, public opinion.

Tertiary Question: What is the mechanism by which the enemy's tactical attacks are translated into changes in public opinion through the media?

The Army War College research project "The Media and National Security Decision-Making" (Marye 2004) explores the near-real-time correlation between reporting from embedded reporters during Operation Iraqi Freedom and public opinion about US military efforts. This study provides valuable, empirical evidence that media coverage *does* affect public opinion and can, in turn, affect national strategy.

Marye's work, at least tangentially, addresses the question of *how* the enemy impacts public opinion through the media, if one accepts the premise that both the enemy and the US "fight" in the same media "battlespace." Techniques that are successful for the enemy may resemble successful US techniques, or at least indicate the common mechanisms for "accessing" the media. Marye's research project can provide a starting point for further investigation, but, as stated before, there is little direct research on this question. This study is, to some extent, "breaking new ground" in this area.

Tertiary Question: Does this enemy capability threaten to prevent the US from achieving its strategic objectives in Iraq (e.g., *is* the will of the American people an operational center of gravity for the American military)?

Since no researcher has previously identified or specifically investigated the enemy capability to influence the media, no conclusions have been reached on how this capability might impact the US military's ability to ultimately achieve its objectives in Iraq or any other theater of operations.

Secondary Question: What is the media system in Iraq?

Tertiary Question: How does the media currently cover the war in Iraq?

Tertiary Question: How has the media arrived at this solution? (Research will focus on how operational design has impacted this current state of affairs.)

Research into military-media relations in Operation Iraqi Freedom ends with, or soon after, the end of "major combat operations" on 1 May 2003 (The White House 2003). Thus, there is no analysis of what happened *after* the embedded media program concluded. This thesis will be "filling in the gaps" in the historical record in this area.

Secondary Question: What is US military capability and doctrine
for countering the enemy's capability?

Tertiary Question: Does the US military *have* the capability to defeat this enemy capability?

There has been a great deal of research into the embedded media program during the first phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The consensus seems to be that the program was a success, and should be the norm for future conflicts. A study of this program can illustrate successful techniques for "defending" the US military's vulnerable center of gravity: public opinion. Collectively, the works described below identify and investigate *one* capability that has been effective in influencing the media: the embedded media

program. However, none examine how this capability might *defeat* the enemy's

capability to do influence the media.

The CGSC thesis "The Role of the Department of Defense Embedded Reporter

Program in Future Conflicts" (Villarreal 2005) examines the costs and benefits of the

embedded media program in Operation Iraqi Freedom. It looks at the cost in terms of

resources and loss of information security and concludes that it is a beneficial program

that should be the model for future conflicts. This work provides insights to the current

thesis on the successful technique of embedding reporters in organizations. This may, in

turn, provide suggestions for changes to US Army doctrine to combat the enemy's

capability to exploit the world media, should they be found necessary.

The Naval Postgraduate School master's thesis "Live from the Battlefield: An

Examination of Embedded War Correspondents' Reporting during Operation Iraqi

Freedom (21 March-14 April 2003)" (Mooney 2004) focuses on the products of the

embedded journalist program during OIF. Mooney's examination explores the question

of whether reporters being embedded with military units "shades" their reporting of the

news. This study is directly germane to the question of which techniques are effective in

shaping the message the public sees and, thus, shaping public opinion.

The master's thesis "Interpreting the Embedded Media Experience: A Qualitative

Study of Military-Media Relations During the War in Iraq" (Westover 2004) provides

observations based on 13 in-depth interviews with reporters embedded with military units

in Iraq. It distills the responses in these interviews into several common themes

characterizing success and failures with the program. This research is useful in defining

the so-called "Galloway effect," the effect that close contact with Soldiers in combat situations can have on subsequent reporting.

The Army War College monograph "Why They Fight: Combat Motivation in the Iraq War" (Wong 2003) also has some tangential relevance to this thesis. The purpose of this monograph is to explore combat motivations and their impact on how well Soldiers fight. However, as part of this study, the researchers investigated the experiences of embedded media during Operation Iraqi Freedom. The observations they make about this experience are applicable to an investigation of what techniques are most useful in shaping the media message during military operations.

Collectively, all of these studies investigate a *technique*, one method that has, as all of these studies conclude, had a positive impact on public perception of military operations in Iraq. This study will investigate whether this technique is *also* effective in countering the enemy's active efforts to negatively impact public opinion, as well as identify additional techniques that are effective in this area.

Tertiary Question: What is the current doctrine on military-media relations, information operations, and public affairs operations?

The Naval War College final report "The Role of Media Coverage in Meeting Operational Objectives" (Mitchell-Musumarra 2003) takes a broader look at media coverage, from Operation Desert Storm, through Operation Restore Hope (Somalia), to Operation Iraqi Freedom. It explores the motivations and concerns of modern media organizations, and looks at how the US' current military doctrine does or does not conflict with the media's requirements for information. Recommendations are also made to improve military-media relations in future conflicts. This study, while not exhaustive,

provides some insights to this research as to "why things are the way they are." That is, it provides some context for why the military has arrived at the techniques it is now using in media relations.

The next chapter, "Methodology," provides a roadmap for how this thesis will address the research questions. It also introduces some models that will be used in chapter 4, "Analysis," which will answer these questions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research for this thesis will begin by answering the secondary and tertiary

research questions: understanding the enemy, the media, and the US military and how

they interact. With these questions answered, it is possible to find an answer to the

primary question, Is current US military doctrine sufficient?

Secondary Question: What is the enemy capability?

In order to further define the problem, this thesis will: (1) examine the enemy

ability to exploit world media to attack the American public's will to prosecute the war,

(2) explore the mechanism by which tactical events are translated into changes in public

opinion through the media, and (3) examine whether an enemy capability exists that

threatens to prevent the US from achieving its strategic objectives in Iraq.

Tertiary Question: Does the enemy have the ability to exploit world media to attack the
American public's will to prosecute the war?

To determine whether the enemy has this capability, research will focus on

examples in which the enemy used this capability in the context of Operation Iraqi

Freedom (OIF). This thesis will attempt to identify specific instances where the enemy

was able to use attacks of tactical insignificance to inflict powerful strategic blows on

public opinion. Similarly, research will attempt to discern examples where the enemy was

able to shape perception of the US military's actions to negatively influence the public's

will to prosecute the war. Using polling data from publicly available sources, it should be

possible to draw a direct correlation between these incidents and changes in the American public's support for the war.

<u>Tertiary Question: What is the mechanism by which the enemy's tactical attacks are translated into changes in public opinion through the media?</u>

This study will next try to isolate the mechanism by which the enemy is able to shape media coverage of military operations in Iraq by examining how events in Iraq are communicated to the American public. In essence, this study will attempt to "follow the trail" from an event in Iraq to the eyes and ears of the American people.

<u>Tertiary Question: If the enemy is determined to have the capability to exploit world media, does this threaten to prevent the US from achieving its strategic objectives in Iraq (e.g., *is* the will of the American people an operational center of gravity for the American military)?</u>

This study will attempt to demonstrate the final point, that this enemy capability threatens the America's success in Iraq and, ultimately, the Global War on Terror. This will be accomplished by examining an example of an operational defeat that the US has suffered as a result of losing the "media fight:" the battle that has come to be known as "Fallujah I." This battle provides a concrete example of how the enemy was able to exploit world media to prevent the US military from pursuing its desired course of action, thus limiting its "freedom of action"; the enemy's effectiveness in its manipulation of the world media eventually forced a withdrawal of Marines from Fallujah (Online NewsHour 2004).

One might ask, at this point, if conclusions drawn from Fallujah I are applicable to the smaller-scale, tactical operations that continually take place in Operation Iraqi Freedom. This is a valid question. However, since the objective is not, necessarily, to

draw lessons as to *how* to effectively use media in these operations, but to highlight the potential danger of *not* effectively using the media, the example is valid. One could also make the case (and this will become clearer in the next chapter, when the battle is actual examined) that, when the battle began, the participants believed that this fight *was* a smaller-scale, tactical operation. It is only as one looks at the battle through the lens of hindsight that it is clear how operationally and, ultimately, strategically significant it was.

<u>Secondary Question: What is the media system in Iraq?</u>

<u>Tertiary Question: How does the media currently cover the war in Iraq?</u>

Several senior journalists who actually managed and executed news coverage in Iraq have agreed to participate in this study. These sources have been intimately involved in the "media system" in Iraq, translating events on the ground into news stories seen by the American public. From these sources, it should be possible to develop an understanding of this system.

<u>Tertiary Question: How has the media arrived at this solution? (Research will focus on how operational design has impacted this current state of affairs.)</u>

This study will finally investigate how the press has arrived at this solution. The study will focus, here, on how operational design has impacted this current state of affairs. The research will include an investigation of how Operation Iraqi Freedom is currently covered by the media, and how this coverage has changed since the beginning of the war. It is also necessary to identify why this change has occurred.

<u>Secondary Question: What is US military capability and doctrine</u>
<u>for countering the enemy's capability?</u>

Once the thesis demonstrates that the problem, in fact, exists, the next question is

to determine why, currently, the US is losing the "war of public opinion" to its enemies.

The two possible explanations for ineffectiveness in "defending" against an enemy

capability are either a lack of *capability* to defeat an enemy capability or *ineffective use*

of that capability (e.g., faulty doctrine resulting in ineffective operational planning and

execution). Research must identify which of these is the cause for the US military's

ineffectiveness in order to suggest remedies. This thesis will seek to determine which of

these two explanations is correct. That is, this thesis will attempt to determine whether

the US military *does have the capability* to defeat the enemy's media-leveraging

capability and attempt to discern whether faulty doctrine is the cause for the US

military's current inability to do so.

<u>Tertiary Question: Does the US military *have* the capability to defeat this enemy
capability?</u>

Demonstrating a "capability' requires that one demonstrate that the US military is

"capable." That is, one must demonstrate that the US military *can* defeat the enemy's

ability to manipulate the media. To do this, research will focus on an instance in which,

by deliberate effort, the US military was able to defeat the enemy capability to exploit the

media: the battle now known as "Fallujah II." By comparing how media was dealt with in

this and the previous battle of Fallujah, it should be possible to identify techniques that

were successful in the second battle. The objective is to identify techniques that can be

generalized to any military operation.

Again, one might question the applicability of this "set piece" battle to overall operations in OIF. Really, the question is whether techniques that work in a large battle of the scale of Fallujah II can be applied to the "steady state," smaller-scale operations that characterize a normal day in Iraq. This is a valid question, and one that must be answered as this study identifies each successful technique used in Fallujah II.

Tertiary Question: What is the current doctrine on military-media relations, information operations, and public affairs operations?

If it is demonstrated that the US military has the *capability* to defeat the enemy's capability to exploit the media, research will seek an explanation for its current ineffectiveness.

One must understand current doctrine in order to answer the primary question, Is US military doctrine sufficient? To accomplish this, the thesis must include a thorough survey of the existing joint doctrine on military-media relations, as it applies to operational planning and execution. This will include a survey of information operations and public affairs operations doctrine. As this survey is completed, it should be possible to draw connections to the failures sited previously in Operation Iraqi Freedom, in order to identify why current US doctrine led to these failures. The focus will be on how joint operational doctrine has led to the current state of media coverage of the war.

The Primary Question: Is US Military Doctrine Sufficient?

Primary Question: Is US joint, operational-level doctrine currently sufficient to, when exercised, neutralize the enemy's ability to use the media to erode the will of the American people (e.g., "defend" the US military's operational center of gravity)?

Finally, with a clear understanding of the enemy capability, the media system on which it acts, and US military capabilities and doctrine, it will be possible to answer the primary research question and, if required, recommend changes to the existing doctrine.

The Models

Throughout the remainder of this thesis, as described above, news stories and tactical and operational events will be discussed and analyzed. To assist in this analysis, it is helpful to have a framework for understanding and comparing disparate information. Two models are needed: (1) A model for describing the system by which a news story travels from the battlefield to the American public and (2) a model for describing what a news stories is, and how actors in the operational area might influence it.

The two models below are provided as hypotheses. The validity of these models will be tested as an integral part of the next chapter, "Analysis." But it is necessary to have *some* framework in order to begin the analysis.

The Media System

The system that brings news about events in Iraq to the American public is a complex and only partially intentional one. Many factors act on the system. The enemy has found a way to influence this system to negatively impact the American public's will to prosecute the war in Iraq. This thesis will seek to understand how the enemy is doing this, and how the US military can counteract this capability.

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To structure the analysis in this thesis, the model in figure 1 will be used to describe this system.
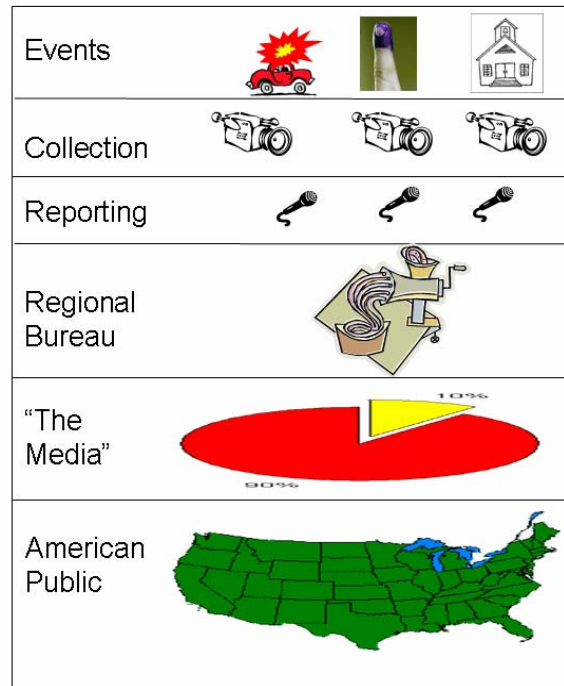
Figure 1.   The Media System

This diagram describes how events that occur in an operational theater "trickle down" to the American public. In essence, this is a "map" depicting the "journey" of a news story from an event to the American "consciousness." If at any of these "layers" the story fails to pass through to the next level, it fails to reach the American people. Thus, each layer acts as a "filter," blocking some news stories while allowing others to pass through.

A news story begins with an event. This could be a car bombing, an election, a school opening, or any of a thousand other events that happens each day in Iraq. For an

event to become a news story, pictures and data about the event must be collected. In essence, the event must be "observed" (though a news story is frequently generated immediately following the event, rather than during the event). In the model above, this procedure is called "collection." This portion of the media system occurs, by definition, in the operational area, in contact with the event or its aftermath.

After all of the raw data is collected, it must be collated into a single, coherent news story, understandable by the target audience. This is referred to in the model above as "reporting." This should not be confused with "reporters," who usually *do* the reporting, but also have a variety of other duties. This process, also, most commonly happens in the operational area, though the specific location is dependent on the location of the reporter doing the entity doing the reporting.

The central consolidation point for stories in an operational theater is the "regional bureau." This is, to some extent, a "command and control node." It is also the physical projection of media companies into the operational area. The bureau is responsible for all of the physical requirements of the individual members of the media company present in the operational area, including security, supply, and shelter. The bureau also coordinates coverage of news events inside the operational area, "tasking" individual reporters to cover events inside the operational area, either in person or through other collection means. Finally, the bureau is responsible, in part, for deciding which news stories pass through to the global media and in what order. The bureau does this actively, by prioritizing stories that leave the operational area, and passively, by deciding how news events in the operational area receive coverage (Spinner 2006, 15-17).

The next layer in the above media model is "the media" itself. This layer is difficult to describe, as it is so diverse. It encompasses both cable and network television news coverage of all varieties, print newspapers, and a vast array of outlets on the internet, including everything from 'blogs to television news agency web pages. Collectively, the physical form of this layer is its infrastructure, including the "brick and mortar" offices that generate it, the broadcast towers and satellite dishes, and the servers that provide presence on the internet. The physical form of this layer, however, is not important to the questions of this thesis. What *is* important is that this layer exists *outside* of the operational area and cannot be influenced directly by actors in the operational area.

From the media, this total news universe, only a fraction of the whole will be dedicated to news about an operational area. An investigation of how the size of this fraction is determined is beyond the scope of this thesis, but the process by which it is determined is a semi-deliberate result of many factors, including public interest in events in the operational area, journalistic interests in the area, emphasis from political leadership of the nation, and dozens of other factors. What is important to understand for the purposes of this model is that only a finite amount of media "space" will be dedicated to the operational area. Not every news event will make it to the media. News events are prioritized for entry into the media, and only those of top priority "make the cut." The mechanism and factors for prioritization of news stories, however, *is* germane to this thesis, and will be explored in the next chapter.

The audience for news stories that pass through all of the layers of this system is the American public. As discussed above, they have an influence on how much total media coverage is dedicated to the operational area and what stories "make the cut" (e.g.,

are included in the coverage of the operational area), but have little or no direct influence on how stories get covered. They are the "consumer" of the news "product."

A News Story

Figure 2 shows a graphic depiction of a news story and how each component may be influenced by third parties (those not involved in the construction of the story). This construct is largely independent of the medium by which the story is communicated to the American people.

NEWS STORY	Methods
PICTURES	Video, stills
DATA	Lying, hiding, spinning
CONTEXT	Events Access
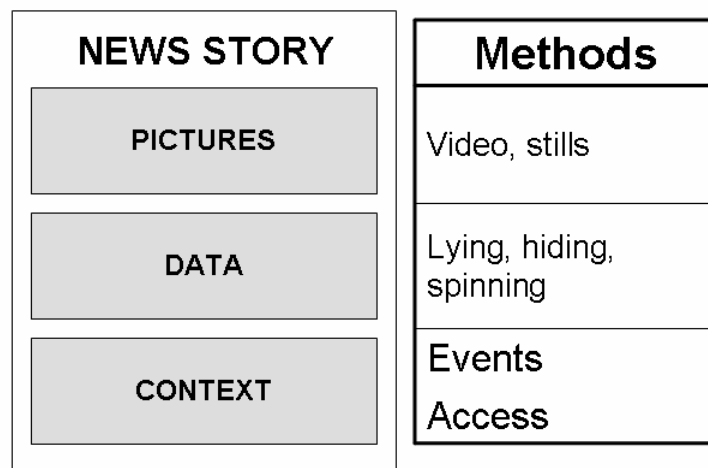
Figure 2.   A News Story

A news story, as the term is used in the remainder of this thesis, is a collection of spoken or written words combined with images that communicate the facts of an event to an audience and their significance. For the purposes of this thesis, the event occurs in the operational area of Iraq, and the audience is the American public (the previous section described a model for the process by which the news story makes this journey).

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Collectively, the news story seeks to inform the audience about the event and why it is important.

However, news stories are the product of a commercial venture. Media outlets (companies that deliver news stories to the American public) derive profit by sustaining and increasing the size of their audience. As such, they wish to stimulate and entertain their audience as well as inform, as this ensures that the audience will continue to use the outlet. This has an influence on both which news stories get covered and how they get covered.

These two, competing influences, the desire to inform and the desire to entertain, will be investigated in much more detail in the next chapter. For the purposes of building a model of a news story and how it is influenced by outside actors, it is only important to recognize that the two influences exist.

The basis of the "news story" portion of this model is a reorganization of the general journalistic model for a news story. The general journalistic model for a news story is "the inverted pyramid." The most important facts go up front (the top of the inverted pyramid--its broad base). The middle of the pyramid contains the secondary, "interesting" side notes. Finally, the bottom of the inverted pyramid is the least important information (Canadian Newspapers Association 2006). In the reorganized model (the figure), the "pictures" and "data" constitute the first and second tier of the inverted pyramid, while the context is mainly at the narrow bottom of the pyramid. However, elements of context pervade the whole news story, by influencing how the facts are prioritized and presented, and which pictures are included.

The "methods of influence" portion of this model is presented as a hypothesis. The "proof" of the validity of these different methods will be the analysis presented in the next chapter.

A news story, broadly, consists of three elements: pictures, data, and context. Pictures are the images, in video or still format, that capture the elements of the event. The most effective pictures are physically captured at the same time and space as the event (or in its immediate aftermath). For that reason, those actors which can be physically present at the event (or immediately after the event) can be collectors of pictures. Actors besides those involved in the construction of the news story can influence this element of a news story by taking pictures or video of the event and providing them to producers of the news story.

The "data" element of the news story is all of the empirical information about the event. It is often referred to as the "5 Ws and 1H" (Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How) of a news story. In short, data is the facts about the event. Third party actors (those not involved in the production of news stories) can only influence these elements of a news story by obfuscating the facts through lying, hiding the facts, or "spinning" them in a dishonest manner. As stated in the "Delimitations" section of Chapter 1, this thesis will not investigate whether the US Army should use these methods, but it is important to know of their existence; they are used by the enemy to manipulate the media, and if one is to defeat this capability, he must first understand it.

The final component of a news story is the most difficult to define, and will be a focus of the remainder of this thesis. Context is how a news story communicates why the events described in the story are important. It requires a degree of subjective analysis of

the facts, and an understanding of the operational area in which the event occurred. For that reason, the substance of the context will be heavily influenced by the individual creating the news story and his understanding of and views about the wider situation in the operational area.

Context, because of its complexity, can be influenced by third parties in several different ways. Context can be influenced, indirectly either by the nature of the event itself, or how the event is collected. The event itself shapes the context which is communicated in a news story. A car bomb communicates something different about an operational area (chaos, disorder) than a school opening (reconstruction, hope for the future). Those not involved in producing news stories can impact the context of news stories about the operational area by generating events *designed* to impact context.

How the news story is covered ("access" as it is called in the model above) has a dramatic impact on context as well. A person present at an event will communicate the significance of the event very differently than someone who is creating the news story but was not present at the event. Also, as stated above, the point of view of the individual creating the news story influence the context the story contains. An actor can influence the context of news stories about an event by providing access to event only to those individuals who will provide the desired context (e.g., share the same views as the actor trying to influence the news story).

The substance of context in a news story is the commentary that accompanies the news story. While third parties often provide "comment" for stories, only the producer of the news story actually provides commentary (the narrative which communicates the facts and their perceived significance to the wider operational area). The comment

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provided by third parties actually comprises "data" that is reported as fact in the story: opposing views about the event from the participants. Thus, third parties cannot actually influence context via commentary, and it is not included in this model.

With a clear methodology for this investigation in place, and models for analyzing the research data, it is now possible to begin analysis. This is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Secondary Question: What is the enemy capability?

In order to counter the enemy's capability to negatively effect the American public's will to fight the war, one must first understand it. Does the enemy actually have this capability, or is some other factor impacting the American public's resolve? If the enemy has this capability, how does it work, and how does he employ it? Is this threat really a danger to the America's efforts in Iraq? This section will seek to answer these questions.

Tertiary Question: Does the enemy have the ability to exploit world media to attack the American public's will to prosecute war?

On 11 October 2005, The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) released a letter written by Ayman al-Zawahiri (the "second-in-command" of al-Qaeda) to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (at the time, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq). The letter, dated 9 July 2005 and intercepted by unknown means, painted a clear picture of al-Qaeda's intentions in Iraq. It highlighted the historical model from which al-Qaeda was operating and the method that al-Qaeda would use to repeat those results (ODNI 2005).

In talking about having a plan for the aftermath in Iraq, after the departure of the US military, al-Zawahiri said, "The aftermath of the collapse of American power in Vietnam--and how they ran and left their agents--is noteworthy" (ODNI 2005). This is at least circumstantial evidence that al-Qaeda considers the situation in Iraq analogous to that in Vietnam in the 1970s. It appears that Vietnam is the historical model from which al-Qaeda is formulating its strategy.

Zawahiri then goes on to indicate the method by which al-Qaeda will force the precipitous withdraw of American forces. He says, "I say to you: that we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media" (ODNI 2005). The implications of the letter are clear. Al-Qaeda wishes to force a US military withdrawl from Iraq, just as it withdrew from Vietnam. The mechanism which they wish to use to force this withdraw is the media.

This indicates that al-Qaeda at least has the *intent* to use the media as a means to damage the will of the American people to prosecute the war. The question remains, Does the enemy have the *capability* to exercise this intent?

The beginning of Ramadan, at the end of October 2003, is a good illustration of the ability of the enemy to impact public opinion with relatively small tactical attacks. Five months after President Bush declared, "major combat operations in Iraq have ended" (White House 2003), it was becoming clear that the war wasn't over. A steady increase in violence, including the beginning of wide spread use of roadside bombs and terrorist style attacks against high-visibility targets like the UN Headquarters in Baghdad in August of 2003 (GlobalSecurity.org, "UN Security Headquarters," 2006) were indications that a deliberate, coordinated insurgency had developed in Iraq. It was against this backdrop of instability that a new wave of violence swept over Iraq.

The campaign began with a daring attack on the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, in 26 October 2003. An insurgent had built a rocket launcher out of a trailer, about 20 68- and 85-millimeters rockets, a generator, and a timer. He then backed the trailer into a park across the street from the al-Rashid Hotel and fled the scene. A few

minutes later, between 8 and 10 of the rockets slammed into the hotel, killing 1 Soldier and wounding 15 others (CNN, "14 die…," 2003).

The losses, while tragic, were tactically insignificant to the efforts of the coalition in Iraq. But, that was not the intent. The presence of the Deputy Secretary at the hotel guaranteed the presence of reporters at the event. Though it is not, however, clear that the attacker even knew the Deputy Secretary was there, the al-Rashid hotel *was* the home of a large number of foreign contractors. It was also in the midst of the Green Zone, the "secure" area that coalition forces struggle to maintain in the middle of Baghdad (NIMA 2003). Both factors indicate that the intended message of the attack was that coalition forces could not maintain stability in Iraq. The true target of the attack was not the hotel or the Deputy Secretary, it was the will of the American people to prosecute the war.

A day later, an even more devastating attack occurred. In the morning hours of 27 October 2003, a suicide bomber loaded a car with a massive amount of explosives and drove it into the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The resultant explosion decimated the facility, killed 10, and wounded 15 (CNN, "Red Cross…," 2006).

The attack did not end the activities of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Iraq. But it did, because of the target, draw the attention of the world media. The apparent intent was not to disrupt the activities of the ICRC or NGOs in general. It was to create the appearance of instability in Iraq and damage the will of the American public to continue the war in Iraq.

With the benefit of hind sight, it appears that these attacks were only two of the more dramatic attacks in a coordinated campaign to damage the will of the American

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people. In addition to the above attacks, 27 October saw a number of other, less dramatic car bombings across Baghdad, claiming 20 lives. A clash between an angry mob and 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor Regiment on 31 October 2003 outside of Abu Ghraib prison left 14 Iraqis dead. A number of other car bombings and attacks on police stations took place during this period (CNN, "14 die…," 2006).

The campaign had the desired effect. A USA Today/Gallup Poll, asked the question, ""Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the situation in Iraq?" In the poll that concluded on 8 October 2003, 47 percent of respondents approved, while 50 percent disapproved. When the poll was conducted again, after this violent period, in a poll concluding on 10 November 2003, the results were 45 percent approval and 54 percent disapproval, a slip of support of 2 percent and 4 percent, respectively. ABC News/*Washington Post* Poll found even more dramatic results when asking the same question. On 13 October 2003, 51 percent of respondents approved, while 47 percent disapproved. When the same question was asked on 29 October 2003, in the midst of this campaign of violence, the results had completely reversed, with only 51 percent *disapproving* and 47 percent approving, a movement of 4 percent points against the war (PollingReport.com 2006).

The Ramadan 2003 campaign is only one example of the enemy using small tactical attacks to impact American public opinion about the war in Iraq. But it illustrates that the enemy does have this capability. The question, then, is how this capability works. If the US military is to find a way to counter this capability, this question must be answered.

To answer this question, the two attacks above and two others will be examined using the model for the media system described in Chapter 3. The intent is to follow the journey of each news story from its beginning, as an event, to its end, with the American public, in order to understand the process that occurs.

The attack on the al-Rashid Hotel

The Event

As described above, on 26 October 2003, a trailer loaded with rockets was parked across from the al-Rashid hotel, in Zawra Park (NIMA 2006). A few moments later, the timer went off, the rockets were fired, and 1 Soldier died and 15 were injured. The presence of the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, and the location of the hotel in the Green Zone, made the event especially newsworthy (CNN, "14 die…," 2006).

Collection

A number of news agencies have their regional bureaus in the immediate vicinity of the al-Rashid hotel. It is a common misperception that reports live and work in the Green Zone. In fact, according to Pam Hess, UPI's Pentagon correspondent, there is only one small press house inside the Green Zone, and it is infrequently occupied. The vast majority of reporters are in "the Red Zone" (e.g., the rest of Iraq), and live and work out of fortified hotels and buildings holding their regional bureaus, most in very close proximity to the Green Zone (CNN Reliable Sources 2006).

Reporters are frequently inside the Green Zone to cover stories, however, and the presence of Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz in Iraq was a news story, even before the attack. So, for this news story, reporters were present, with their cameras, to cover the story in person.

Reporting

Because of the presence of infrastructure inside and immediately outside the Green Zone, it was possible for all of the major, television news networks to broadcast reports, live, from right outside the al-Rashid hotel. Context was added by reporters, on the scene, as the story unfolded. In essence, collection and reporting happened simultaneously, during the event.

Regional Bureaus

Due to the proximity of most regional bureaus to the al-Rashid Hotel (NIMA 2003), the regional bureaus acted, mostly, as facilitators of live coverage, facilitating the connectivity between reporters at the event and anchors for 24-hour news channels, such as CNN and Fox News, in the US. In this instance, they did not edit content or provide context to the news story.

"The Media"

This was primarily a live, television news story. The attack happened at about 6:10 AM Iraqi time, which was about 9:10 PM Eastern Standard Time. Americans awoke to the news on Sunday morning, and it dominated the conversation on all of the Sunday morning talk shows. These shows, including *Fox News Sunday* (FOX), *CNN Late Edition*

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(CNN), *Meet the Press* (NBC), and *This Week* (ABC), each begin with a news roll-up of the weekend's news. This story dominated the coverage.

Sunday morning and afternoon attacks are especially lucrative because they capture the sparse "big three" network news coverage. ABC, NBC, and CBS each has a morning talk show, between a half and a full hour, which combines news roll-up of the weekends news, interviews with important political leaders from both the executive and legislative branches of government, and "round table discussions" with influential commentators and reporters (Brock 2006). Attacks on Sunday morning and afternoon in Baghdad have the benefit of putting national leaders "on the spot." That is, the event happens while interviews are being taped with leaders for these Sunday morning talk shows and they are asked to comment, largely, as the event is happening. It has the effect of magnifying the significance of events by forcing important leaders to comment on them. Thus, additional context is added to the event by using the timing of the event to force extensive commentary on the event. Such was the case in the attack on the al-Rashid Hotel.

The Attack on the Red Cross

The Event

As discussed in the previous section, on the morning of Monday, 27 October 2003, the first day of Ramadan, a wave of violence swept over Baghdad. The most dramatic attack on this day was the bombing of the ICRC headquarters.

Collection

The collection of footage, pictures, and data from this attack was done by freelance journalists, often called "stringers" in the industry. This was due to many factors, including the number of attacks that happened on the day, the sense of danger and instability in the city at the time, and the limited resources present in Baghdad then and now (McWethy 2006).

"Stringers" are journalists that are not actual employees of media outlets (those news agencies that deliver "finished product" (e.g., complete news stories) directly to the American public. Rather they are temporarily employed by a media outlet, for the purpose of collecting data and pictures for finished news stories. Stringers normally communicate directly with regional bureaus, in the operational area (McWethy 2006). According to Collin Freeman, a freelance reporter (and self-identified "stringer") in Iraq since May 2003 this has become the preeminent method of covering the news in Iraq, due to a number of factors, most important of which being security concerns for westerners traveling in Iraq; media outlets due not want to risk their employees except for the most important news stories (Freeman 2006).

For the purposes of discussion throughout the remainder of this chapter, a distinction will be made between "reporters" and "stringers." This distinction is not intended to derogate one group or the other, or to imply that either is not a legitimate journalist. Rather, this distinction is intended to highlight the difference in their functions. The important distinctions between stringers and reporters are:

1. Reporters are employees of media outlets while stringers are contracted to media outlets.

2. Reporters are responsible for delivering complete news stories (as per the model in Chapter 3) while stringers only provide the pictures and data.

Another important source of data and pictures for media outlets is international news agencies, such as Reuters, United Press International (UPI), or Associated Press (AP) which sell their products to media outlets (McWethy 2006). Because the function of freelance journalists and these news agencies is essentially the same, providing pictures and data to media outlets, this thesis will use the term "stringers" to refer, generically, to any person or agency that fills this function.

Reporting and Regional Bureaus

Reporting was done, largely, by reporters who had not been at the event. Rather, they received pictures and data from stringers at their regional bureaus, and then produced the complete news stories there. Thus, context was added at the regional bureau, by people who were not present at the event, some time after the event had happened. Reporters relied on their broader perception of the operational area, and the reports of stringers, rather than direct knowledge of the event, in developing the context of the news story (CNN, "Bloody Day…," 2003).

"The Media"

This news story ran, largely as created in the operational area at regional bureaus, in newspaper and television media outlets across America. Its timing (about 8:30 AM in Monday in Iraq, or 11:30 PM EST), meant that this would lead the morning news on a normal business day in the US. It would dominate the news on 24-hour news channels like FOX and CNN, but would not lead the evening news on the "big three" until the

evening news shows. The context provided by reporters, at regional bureaus in the operational area would shape the American people's perception of the event.

An examination of a few additional events and their coverage in the media will illustrate some additional mechanisms the enemy uses to attack the will of the American people. In the first example, the beheading of Nick Berg, returning to the model for a news story described in Chapter 3, the enemy influences news stories by providing pictures of the event. In the second example, the attack on the "mosque," the enemy influences the story by providing data about the event.

The beheading of Nick Berg

The Event

On 11 May 2004, a video tape showing the beheading of Nick Berg by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was posted on the militant Islamic website, *Muntada al-Ansar*. Prior to the beheading, Zarqawi read a statement explaining that the beheading was in response to "atrocities" at the Abu Ghraib prison (CNN, "Arabic Papers…," 2006).

Collection

The video was created and distributed by al-Qaeda in Iraq. Media outlets collected comments and data about the video from leaders both in the US and in the operational area. But the primary data collection was consumption of information on the website where the video first appeared. In essence, the insurgents that created the events were the primary collectors for news stories about the event.

Reporting

There was very little actual reporting on the event. What little did occur was done by reporters in their regional bureaus, adding commentary to comments received from military and civilian leaders in Iraq, and by reporters at media outlets in the US, creating news stories centered around still photos and less graphic excerpts from the video provided by the insurgence. In short, the event itself provided the context of the news story.

Regional Bureaus

The delivery method of this video "short-circuited" the normal process for the construction of news stories about Iraq. Regional Bureaus provided follow-up stories, with reaction from leaders in the region, but had little influence on news stories about the event.

"The Media"

By contrast, in this situation, media outlets in the US had a great deal of influence over the news stories about the event. Initial stories about the event originated from, and were created solely in the US. It was only later that regional bureaus began to add additional stories about reaction to the event.

At this point, it is possible to make a link between the two models. That is, it is possible to determine where in the media system the components of a news story are generated. Figure 3 depicts this graphically.
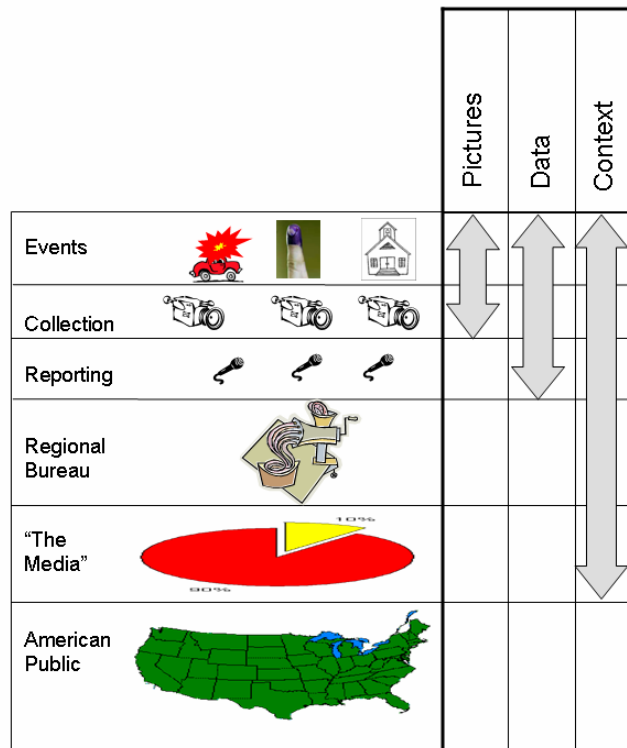
Figure 3. Generation of a News Story in the Media System

Pictures can be generated either at the event (as in the case of the beheading of
Nick Berg) or during the collection process (as in the case of the al-Rasheed hotel attack
and the bombing of the ICRC). Data can be generated at the event itself (as in the case of
the Nick Berg video, where no additional data was available besides the video and
accompanying statement), during the collection process (as in the case of the ICRC
attack, where stringers collected data at the scene), or during the reporting process (as in
the case of the al-Rasheed attack, where reporter, doing live coverage, at the scene, were
obtaining and reporting data in real time, as they generated the news story).

Where context is generated is a more complex question to answer. Context can be
added at the event, by the nature of the event itself, as in the case of all of the events

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described thus far (each event contributes to the perception of Iraq as unstable and deteriorating). The collection and reporting process can also generate context, as in the case of the al-Rasheed bombing, where reporters on the scene *were* the collectors, and added context as they reported the story. Context can also be added at the regional bureau, as in the case of the ICRC bombing, where stringers gathered the pictures and data for the story, and it was actually compiled as a complete news story at the regional bureau. Context can even be generated in the US, in the "Media" component of the media system, as in the case of the Nick Berg video, where the video was obtained through the internet, in the US, and the reporting was all done by media outlets, as they delivered the news stories to the American public.

With the mechanism for how news stories are generated from the operational area identified, it is almost possible to describe how the enemy impacts the media system to attack the will of the American public. But one more, brief example will shed more light on the methods the enemy uses, and better inform the discussion.

The Bombing of a "Wedding Party"

The Event

A few days after the video taping of the Nick Berg beheading, on 18 May 2004, US Army forces conducted offensive operations against a suspected safe-house in the small town of Mogr el-Deeb, about five miles from the Syrian border, in al-Anbar province in Iraq. During the action, the force came under heavy fire and called for close air support. In the ensuing action, about forty to forty-five Iraqis were killed, including approximately ten women and five children (Ricks 2004).

Collection

       The exact details are not clear, but within a day of the attack, a video tape was obtained by the Associated Press, purporting to show a "wedding party" that was occurring just moments before the bombing. The story that accompanied the video tape, as told to the Associated Press, was that the video was filmed by Yasser Shawkat Abdullah, who was hired to film the event, and himself died at the hands of the American bombs (Faramarzi 2004).

       Stringers from the Associated Press then traveled to the location themselves, where they found the remains of broken instruments. "Witnesses" in the town corroborated the story initially told to the Associated Press (Faramarzi 2004). As soon as the story reached media outlets, an international uproar ensued.

       Insurgents had successfully influenced the data in the news story in order to de-legitimize the actions of the US military in Iraq and attack the American public will to fight the war.

Reporting

       With the initial AP-generated story already in the media and being delivered by media outlets to the American public, reporting for the news story, as it originally ran, had really been done by the stringers, and the news story ran as they had written it, with the only context provided by the insurgents. Subsequent reporting would be done by regional bureaus, seeking comment from the coalition military leadership in Iraq. A great deal of contradictory evidence would be provided by the coalition, but the damage had been done. The story was already in the media.

Regional Bureaus

As an extension of media outlets, operating in the operational area, regional bureaus had really been "non-players" in the original news story. The story had traveled directly from the collectors (the stringers working for the Associated Press) to "The Media." Regional bureaus would only provide additional news stories in the form of "follow-ups," providing reaction from US and Iraqi leaders in the operational area.

"The Media"

Still photos from the video ran in news papers with the original, AP text providing the context. The captions of the photos were particularly damning of US actions in the incident. The first photo showed a bride and groom exiting a car. The accompanying caption read: "TV Image shows the bride arriving for her wedding party in the remote desert area near Mogr el-Deeb, Iraq, Tuesday, May 18 2004."

The second still photo showed two children dancing in front of two men in traditional Arab robes and headdresses. The caption read:

> Iraqi children celebrate during a wedding ceremony shortly before U.S. helicopters fired on the party, according to survivors of the attack, in the remote desert area near Mogr el-Deeb, Iraq , 600 km west of Baghdad and 20 km from the Syrian border, in this image made Sunday, May 23, 2004 from a Wednesday May 19 video obtained by the Associated Press. The attack killed more than 40 people, including Yasser Shawkat Abdullah, the cameraman who filmed the video. The U.S. military says it is investigating the attack and that evidence so far indicates the target was a safehouse for foreign fighters. (Associated Press 2006)

In both cases, the claims are assumed to be true, the facts of the US military are assumed by the tone to be in question, and the insurgent-provided pictures and data shape the context of the story.

Figure 3 above identified where in the media system each component of a news story is generated. It is now possible to assess how the enemy impacts news stories, in order to identify the mechanism by which he, ultimately, negatively impacts the will of the American people to prosecute the war in Iraq. These methods are illustrated in figure 4.

NEWS STORY	Methods	Enemy
PICTURES	Video, stills	X
DATA	Lying, hiding, spinning	X
CONTEXT	Events	X
	Access	X

Figure 4.   Enemy Influence on a News Story

The enemy influences the pictures for a news story by providing his own pictures. In the case of the Nick Berg beheading, the *only* pictures available were those provided by the enemy, via the internet. In the case of the bombing of the "wedding party," the enemy provided the essential pictures that distinguished this incident from any of the other thousands of CAS (close air support) sorties that were flown over Iraq in the month of May 2004.

The "wedding party" bombing also illustrates an instant where the enemy influenced the data by providing "witnesses" who corroborated their version of events. By providing a ready source of false information about the event, they were able to create a news event where one had not previously existed.

The way in which the enemy impacts the context of a news story is more subtle. The very generation of these events provides some context to the news stories they initiated. In each case, the events communicate a sense of chaos and lawlessness in Iraq and contribute to a perception of the theater of operations as "out of control" of the US military.

But the enemy also impacts context by limiting access during the collection and reporting process of news story generation. In the case of the Nick Berg beheading, all media outlets had was a video. They could not interview Abu Musab al-Zarqawi to find out the background about the event. They certainly couldn't ask Nick Berg for his reaction. In the case of the attack on the al-Rasheed hotel and the bombing of the ICRC, the very nature of the attacks, and the insurgency in general, precluded reporters or stringers from interviewing the participants, watching the planning of the attacks, or watching them take place. Such access could have provided context contrary to the enemy's aims. Why? Perhaps those conducting the attacks had been coerced by threats to their families. Were this true, it would have countered the perception of an angry Iraqi populace rising up against American occupiers. Without such access, no such investigation was possible.

In every case examined thus far, the enemy influence was exerted either at the event itself (in the case of the al-Rasheed attack, the ICRC bombing, and the Nick Berg

beheading) or during the collection process (in the case of the "wedding party" bombing). Also, in every case examined, the enemy actions seemed to be intended to create a perception of the operational area as "uncontrollable" and "deteriorating." So, in answer to the tertiary questions of what mechanism the enemy uses to attack the will of the American public, the answer seems to be that the enemy attacks the will of the American public to prosecute the war by influencing every element of news stories, at the event itself and during the collection process, in order to create a perception that US military efforts in Iraq are failing, and the situation in Iraq is getting worse.

Having demonstrated that the enemy has the capability to use the media to attack the will of the American people, and identified the mechanism he uses to do this, the next question is, So what? Is this capability a threat?

Tertiary Question: Does this enemy capability threaten to prevent the US from achieving its strategic objectives in Iraq (e.g., *is* the will of the American people an operational center of gravity for the American military)?

US military handling of the media in the War in Iraq, when it began in March of 2003 was, from any perspective, superb. Prior to initiation of hostilities, the Department of Defense had made the risky decision to embed journalists with military units and allow them to cover the war from the "tip of the spear." The US military was directed to provide resources and security to journalists, and facilitate their coverage of the war with "minimally restrictive access" (DoD, "Media Guidance," 2003).

It was a huge gamble. What if a journalist caught footage of the wrong thing? What if the media reported critical, sensitive information which could be of use to the enemy? What if a Soldier or marine was injured or killed on camera? But the gamble paid off. The program was lauded as a success by press and military alike (Katovsky 2005,

xii-xvii). The decision had had the desired effect, as well. Public opinion soared to an all time high concerning the war. In a Pew Poll conducted the day after the statue of Saddam Hussein fell (10 April 2003), 74 percent percent of those polled felt that it was the "right decision" to use military force in Iraq (PollingRepot.com 2006).

As the second year of the War in Iraq began, it had become clear that the insurgency was a concerted, coordinated effort. Despite the US military's best efforts, violence continued at elevated levels in many places in the country. Media coverage had changed dramatically. The embedded media program had ended for most news agencies by May of 2003. Increasingly, news agencies consolidated their operations, basing reporters in regional bureaus in Baghdad. As security devolved, stringer video became the norm (Lacey 2004, 37-39).

Public opinion had cooled as well, though a plurality of Americans still supported the war in Iraq. In a poll conducted between the 10th and 14th of March 2004, CBS News found that 55 percent of respondents still felt that the US "did the right thing" in using military force in Iraq. An NBC/Wall Street Journal poll during the same period found that 50 percent of respondents still felt that removing Saddam Hussein was "worth it" in terms of "number of U.S. military casualties and the financial cost of the war" (Polling Report.com 2006).

It was against this backdrop that the battle now called "Fallujah I" took shape. On 31 March 2003, a convoy was ambushed in Fallujah, at the time a hotbed of insurgent activity. The American public awoke that morning to scenes of the charred bodies of four American civilians, Blackwater Security employees, being beaten and hung from a bridge on the edge of the city. Stringer video from Associated Press Television News was

rebroadcast in every news outlet, showing a jubilant crowd of Iraqis dancing beneath the victims and chanting "Fallujah is the graveyard of Americans." (Associated Press, "Violence Strikes," 2006).

The response was immediate. Marines of the 1st Marine Regiment moved into the city along two axes of advance. Resistance was determined and prolonged. A five-day battle ensued, during which the Marines made significant progress in killing insurgents and dismantling insurgent infrastructure (West 2005, 89-94). The insurgents in Fallujah were clearly no match for the US Marine Corps on the battlefield.

But the insurgents were fighting on a different battlefield as well. They had invited a reporter from Al Jazeera, Ahmed Mansour, and his crew into Fallujah. A steady stream of video flowed out of the city, including video of wounded and dead civilians, weeping mothers, and destroyed buildings. This video initially aired only on Arab-language news channels in the Middle East. However, because there were no other journalists in the city, the video eventually filtered into the western media (West 2005, 89-94).

The military and political leadership in Iraq was forced to respond to wild charges of American atrocities in Fallujah. As reports from Arab news agencies made their way into western media outlets, a report of 600 Iraqi civilians killed, and more than 1,250 injured began to be stated as fact in the American press. Only passing skepticism was expressed to insurgent-generated charges that more than half of the dead were women and children. Political pressure mounted, both from Iraqi political leaders and the American public. Finally, on 9 April 2004, the head of the office of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), Paul Bremer, announced a "unilateral suspension of

offensive operations" in the city (GlobalSecurity.org, "Fallujah," 2006). Three weeks

later, an Iraqi-brokered hand-over of the city was initiated, and the Marines withdrew

(Online NewsHour 2006).

In their haste to retaliate against the insurgent atrocity in Fallujah, the US military

had utterly failed to consider the media "dimension" to this fight. Only one reporter,

Robert D. Kaplan of *The Atlantic* magazine, was embedded with the 1st Marine

Regiment on 31 March 2004 (AtlanticOnline 2006). But Mr. Kaplan was a print reporter,

and though he did do numerous telephone interviews during the fight, his voice was

quickly drowned out by video, purportedly from Fallujah and broadcast by Al Jazeera,

showing children on stretchers being carried away from the rubble of bombed buildings.

After the fight had concluded, and the "unilateral suspension of offensive

operations" began, journalists from American and other Western news agencies arrived at

the fight (Online NewsHour 2006). But the damage had already been done. They arrived

just in time to see the 1st Marine Regiment "retreat" from Fallujah.

The impact on American public opinion about the war was catastrophic. In a CBS

News poll conducted after the self-imposed cease-fire showed only 47 percent of

respondents now thought that we had done "the right thing" by using military force in

Iraq. That would fall even further, to 39 percent by 11 May 2004, after the withdrawal of

the Marines from Fallujah. Similarly, an NBC/Wall Street Journal poll, conducted on 11

June 2004, showed that only 40 percent of respondents now felt that the war had been

"worth it." These represented shifts of 16 percent in the CBS News poll and 10 percent in

the NBC/Wall Street Journal poll, respectively (PollingReport.com 2006).

To put these losses in perspective, it is useful to examine another "media defeat": the Tet Offensive. In the early morning hours of 31 January 1968, breaking the Tet cease-fire, North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Viet Cong forces stunned the US and South Vietnamese militaries by striking over 100 different locations simultaneously. Around 67,000 enemy troops would eventually be committed to the effort (Against nearly 1.1 million US and South Vietnamese forces). The offensive, tactically and operationally, was doomed to failure (Oberdorfer 1971, 246-251).

But the targets seemed designed to stun the American *people*. Three NVA divisions and around 3,000 Viet Cong "irregulars" actually penetrated the heart of the American presence in Vietnam: Saigon. Sappers even breached and, for a few minutes threatened to overtake US forces at the American Embassy itself (Pisor 1982, 170-177). While the offensive would be operationally and tactically unsuccessfully, it achieved its strategic objective better than its planners could have ever hoped.

Prior to the Tet Offensive, the President's job approval rating stood at 48 percent, while approval of his handling of Vietnam was 39 percent. After the offensive, both numbers fell a dozen or more percentage points (to 36 percent and 26 percent, respectively). But, more importantly, reports of the Tet Offensive moved public opinion about the war itself. Prior to the Tet Offensive, 45 percent of Americans regarded the "war in Vietnam as a mistake," while 60 percent of Americans identified themselves as "hawks." After the Tet Offensive, 49 percent of Americans felt the war was a mistake, and only 41 percent of Americans identified themselves as "hawks" (Simon 2006).

These numbers are strikingly similar to those seen after "Fallujah I." If one accepts the widely held belief that the Tet Offensive was the turning point in the Vietnam

War, the point at which American began losing the war, the implications are startling. Ultimately, whether American public opinion is an operational center of gravity is irrelevant. One can debate endlessly whether a center of gravity at the operational level must be an enemy formation or may be something less tangible but this is beside the point. As the historical example of the Tet Offensive shows, loss of the support of the American people can, eventually, lead to the inability to achieve operational objectives, and loss of the war.

Because the US military had not actively sought to facilitate coverage of the first battle of Fallujah, as it had so ably done during the initial invasion of Iraq, the insurgents were able to "fill the void." The global, 24-hour news apparatus which characterizes twenty-first-century media *must* cover the important events of the day. If the US military does not feed the media's ravenous appetite (e.g., provide the media with the means to cover events), news agencies will find another way to cover the story. If the only video available to accompany their on-air commentary is video provided by insurgents, that is what modern media outlets will use.

This lesson is not lost on the US military. Since this fight, there has been a growing effort to use pictures to influence the news stories that leave Iraq. US CENTCOM (Central Command) and MNF-I (Multi-National Force-Iraq) both maintain websites with a steady stream of multimedia products from Iraq. They also collect news stories from the world media that support their respective command messages and re-publish them on their sites (US Central Command 2006).

Surprisingly, however, as late as the summer of 2005, there was still very little combat power dedicated to providing pictures to the media. MNF-I maintains only one

combat camera crew, which supports "strategic effects" efforts, such as filming elections. Their footage is distributed via DVIDS (Digital Video Image Distribution System) to media outlet headquarters around the world or, in extreme cases, provided on DVD for regional bureaus to pick-up in the Green Zone in Baghdad. The vast majority of pictures provided to the media are still pictures, which come from units in the operational area. They are sent to MNF-I, which posts them on its website and notifies the press via e-mail distribution lists (Boylan 2006).

Reexamining figure 4, it is now possible to compare how the US military and the enemy influence news stories. It appears that the US is "ceding ground" to the enemy. Figure 5 shows this comparison.

NEWS STORY	Methods	Enemy	US
PICTURES	Video, stills	X	X
DATA	Lying, hiding, spinning	X	
CONTEXT	Events	X	X
	Access	X	

Figure 5.   Enemy and US Military Influence on a News Story

The US now (significantly more than before the first battle of Fallujah) attempts to influence news stories by providing pictures. The US military also, consciously or not, influences news stories by creating events. Training the Iraq military, opening schools,

and conducting elections all impact the context of news stories. The effectiveness of this method will be examined later in this chapter.

As stated in the delimitations, this thesis will not seek to advocate that the US military lie or deceive the media, but one must acknowledge that this cedes that "territory" to the enemy. Even excepting this delimitation, the US military *could* influence news stories by effecting access. However, in all of the examples sited thus far, they did not. In the example of Fallujah I, the US military made no effort, before the attack, to facilitate the embedding of additional journalists. It was an accident of fate that Robert Kaplan happened to be embedded with the Marines before the attack began, or there would have been no journalists present with US forces at all.

The question remains: *Can* the US military regain some of this ground lost to the enemy? This thesis will return to this question. But first, it is important to better understand the media system and the actors that operate in it.

Secondary Question: What is the media system in Iraq?

Thus far, this chapter has examined the enemy capability to influence the media system. As that examination progressed, it became clear that the media system, the engine that translates events into news stories seen by the American public, is not a monolithic apparatus, controlled by a single entity, but a process acted on by a multitude of actors. The key to understanding the media system is to understand these actors, their limitations, and the interests that drive their actions.

In examining the enemy capability to influence the media, this chapter has identified several types of actors on the media system, and what each does. Figure 6 shows these actors, and their scope of influence on the media system.
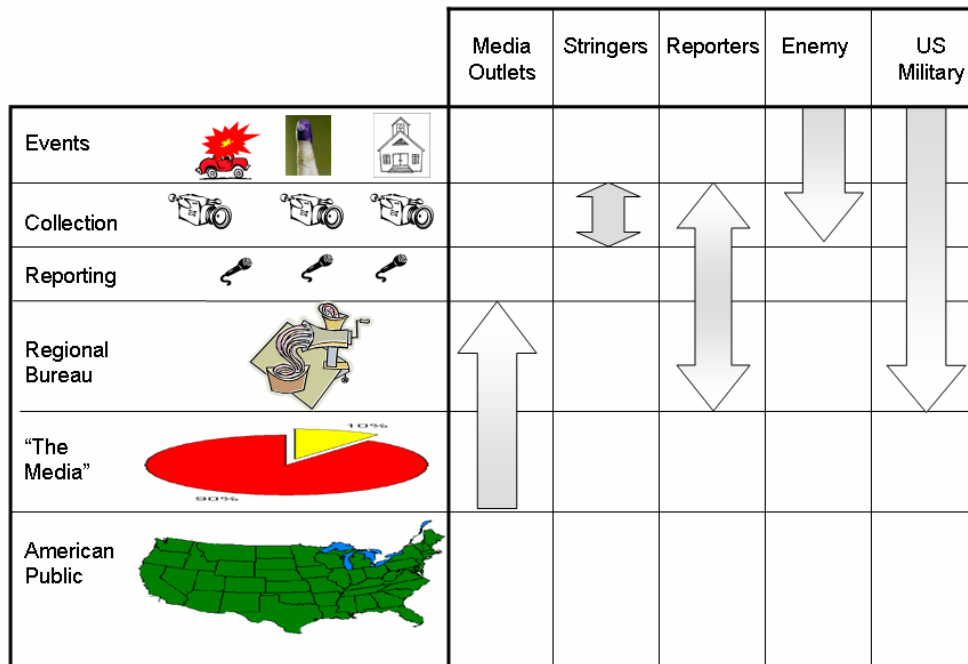
Figure 6.   Spheres of Influence in the Media System

Media Outlets

Media outlets are those companies that deliver finished news stories to the American public. These include (but are not limited to) 24-hour cable news networks, broadcast network news departments, news papers, and news magazines. They are physically located in the US, but have a physical manifestation in the operational area as well, in the form of regional bureaus.

Stringers

  As discussed earlier in this chapter, "stringers" is used in this thesis to refer both to freelance journalists and international news agencies like Reuters, AP, and UPI. The common elements of actors in this class are that they are not employed by media outlets, and they provide the raw materials of news stories (pictures and data) to media outlets. Because they are not involved in the delivery of finished news stories to the American public, their sphere of influence is very small, limited to the "collection" phase of the media system.

  An example of this narrow focus is the bombing of the ICRC. Stringers collected video and data from the site, but they did not write the news stories or deliver them to the public. They simply brought pictures back to the regional bureaus, where this process occurred.

  The actual process by which stringer material goes from the operational area to the American public is not at all as linear as the model used in this thesis implies. Some stringer material, especially that from media agencies like UPI, Reuters, and API, goes directly to media outlet headquarters around the world, in cities like London and New York. By contrast, materials from freelance journalists might go either to the regional bureau *or* media outlet headquarters, or even, in extreme cases of breaking news, be broadcast straight to the American public via phone interviews, taped voice reports, or raw footage (more commonly done in the case of radio news or 24-hour television news outlets). The common thread, still, is that these entities are not employees of media outlets, and their output is *generally* only a component of finished news stories (McWethy 2006).

Reporters

Reporters are employed by media outlets, and consolidate the components of news stories into a finished "product" that can be delivered to the American public. They have a broader impact on the media system than any of the actors except the combatants in the operational area. They are often involved in collection and the operations at regional bureaus, as well as in the "reporting," the actual compilation of the news story (Spinner 2006, 1-7). To illustrate this broad range of influence, it is useful to again examine the example news stories at the beginning of this chapter. In the rocket attack on the al-Rasheed hotel, reporters traveled to the site of the attack, and actively collected pictures and data about the event. Reporting occurred while the event was in progress. However, in the attack on the ICRC headquarters, they operated at the regional bureaus, receiving the data from stringers and "reporting" (compiling the stories) at their bureaus.

"Reporters" is a somewhat generic term, meant to describe people responsible for producing news stories. The process, actually, is a collaborative effort between multiple employees, working at the regional bureau. At ABC news, for example, "producers" and "correspondents" work together in the regional bureau to build a story. The producer actually "owns" a story from beginning to end, collecting the data and pictures for the final story, while the correspondent may do the writing and "voice-over" for the story. The correspondent will work on many different stories simultaneously. This process is only one method, used at ABC, and might differ from other media outlets. Even at ABC, the actual division of work varies from story to story (McWethy 2006). However, for the purposes of this discussion, all employees of media outlets, working on the production of final news stories, will be referred to, collectively, as "reporters."

The Enemy

This term was defined in great detail in chapter 1. However, the examination

above did illuminate a new limitation in the enemy's capability: his sphere of influence.

In all of the examples above, the enemy had some role in generating the event (though

the US military also shaped the event in the example of Fallujah I, by attacking into the

city). The enemy also plays a role in collection, as in the example of the Nick Berg

beheading, where the video was produced and distributed by him. But the enemy has no

capability to actually influence where reporting happens or how and where regional

bureaus operate.

The US Military

It is perhaps counter-intuitive, but it is the US military that has the broadest

sphere of influence of any actor in the media system. The US military influences every

level of the media system from the event to regional bureaus. First, the US military

influences or even generates events. On a single day, just the front page of the "Featured

Stories" at the MNF-I website illustrates this. On 16 August 06, the featured stories

included these headlines:

> Majority of Iraqi Police Trained and Equipped
> Iraqi army engineers teach weapons training to U.S. Soldiers
> Australian troops take on new role
> Family reunions help healing process
> Engineer: 'Helping kids the best part'
> MND-B Soldiers distribute humanitarian aid (MNF-I, "Featured Stories," 2006)

It is not necessary that all of these events were intended solely to influence the

American public's perception of the war in Iraq. But, the fact that these events, out of all

of the events that occur every day in a theater of war, were highlighted to the media as "featured events," certainly indicates that MNF-I appreciates their value in that regard.

This chapter has already identified that the US military influences the collection phase of the media system by providing pictures for use by media outlets.

The way in which the US military has influence over the "reporting" and "regional bureau" levels of the media system is less obvious. It really stems from the nature of the conflict in Iraq. The US military is the dominant military power in the country, and has the ability to project combat power to any part of the country. The identification of their influence over reporting and regional bureaus is not intended to convey that they can threaten these entities, but that they can, at will, be present wherever these entities are. This point is best illustrated by two incidents sited in Jackie Spinner's book, *Tell Them I Didn't Cry*. Jackie Spinner was a reporter for the *Washington Post*, in Iraq, from 2004 to 2005. In the first incident, she tells of a threat against the regional bureau, in the Sheraton Hotel in Baghdad. The bureau was notified of the threat by a representative from MNF-I, and an Army unit was dispatched to their hotel. In the second incident, Ms. Spinner was attacked while leaving Abu Ghraib prison by several insurgents. She was rescued by Marines who chased off the aggressors (2006, 53-59). These examples are, of course, anecdotal, but they do illustrate the broader point: that the US military is, from the point of view of journalists and regional bureaus, somewhat omnipresent in Iraq.

The spheres of influence of these actors seem to be the determining factor in their capability to influence the components of a news story. Figure 7 shows this correlation.

The discussion accompanying figure 3, earlier, illustrated where in the media system each of the components of a news story was generated. If the "spheres of influence" described in figure 6 are overlaid on this illustration, a pattern begins to emerge: there is a correlation between an entities influence over the media system and its ability to influence the components of a news story.
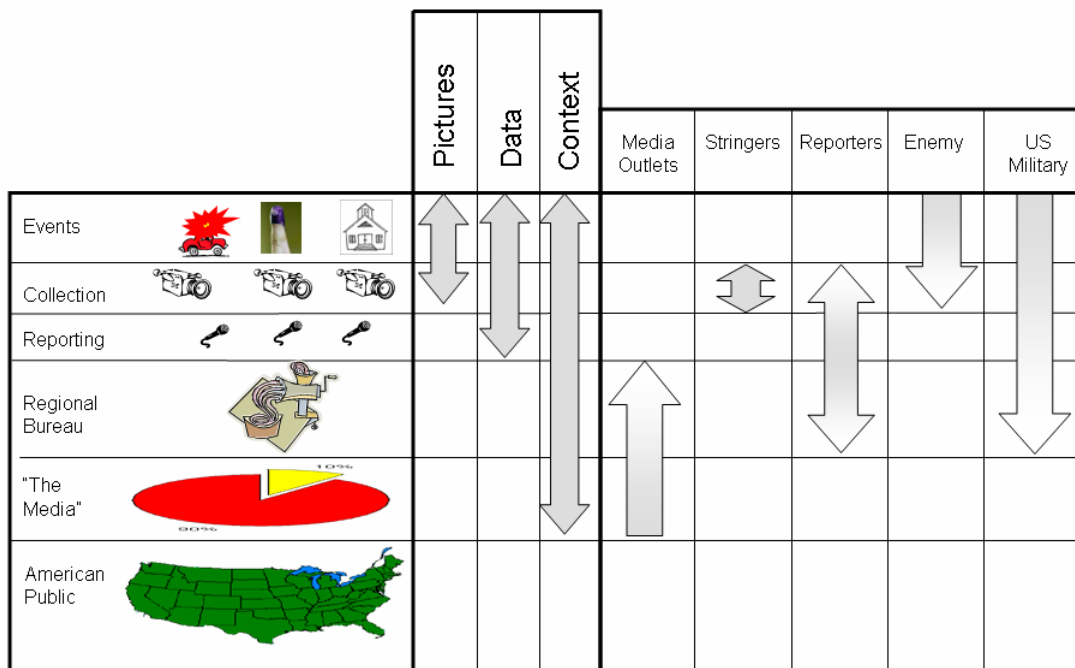
Figure 7.   The Media System, Components of a News Story, and Spheres of Influence

Media outlets, because their influence is limited to the regional bureaus and above, cannot influence pictures and data, only the context of a story. Stringers actively influence data and pictures but, by virtue of their function, do not really influence the context of stories. Reporters influence every component of a story because their influence spans every place where each component of a story is generated.

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The previous section concluded with a discussion of how, currently, both the enemy and US military actors influence the components of a news story (see Figure 5). But figure 7 would seem to indicate that the US military *should* be much more effective at doing so. The US military has the broadest sphere of influence, and is the only actor that shares a "level" of the media system with every other actor in the system (which suggests that they have *influence* on every other actor in the system). This begs the question: Why, then, has the enemy been so much more successful at impacting the will of the American people to prosecute the war?

To answer this question, it is first necessary to answer the question, Why are things the way they are?

Tertiary Question: How has the media arrived at this solution? (Research will focus on how operational design has impacted this current state of affairs.)

Thus far, the media system has been defined, and the actors that act on that system have been identified. The impact that each actor has on the media system has also begun to be defined. Now, it is possible to identify *why* each actor acts on the system in the way he does (e.g., what each actor's interests are).

Media Outlets

Earlier in this chapter, it was identified, quantitatively, that embedding was wildly successful in maintaining, and even increasing, public support for the war. The evidence seems to indicate that the embedding has two key advantages. First, it allows the US military to influence news stories by impacting access to the story. The US can control which units receive embeds, and at what level, impacting the perspective from which a story is covered (Payne 2006, 81-93).

But, embedding has a subtler influence on a news story, by actually impacting the context which is eventually given to the story by the embedded reporter. It has been called the "Galloway Effect," after the reporter who was embedded with 1-7 CAV during the battle at LZ X-Ray during 1965 (it is said that, after his experience during those three days, he never wrote a negative story about Soldiers in the field). Jim Lacey, a retired reserve Army lieutenant colonel, was an embedded journalist with the 101st Airborne Division for *Time* magazine during the invasion of Iraq. He tells the story of a conversation with a CBS report who told him, "I just had no idea our army was filled with such quality people," after spending only a few days embedded with an Army brigade (Lacey 2004, 37-39). There is a great deal of evidence that embedding has a beneficial impact (from the perspective of the US military) on the context attached to stories they produce.

Why does it work? Why does the process of embedding influence the context included in news stories? The explanation seems to be as simple as personal relationships. There is an interesting aside in the ground-breaking work, "Why They Fight" about embedded reporters. One reporter, after a serious incident commented on how his relationship with a brigade commander influenced how he reported the story.

> What was really helpful was that by then, he and I had already got to know each other. I liked him and trusted him. When he said he was concerned about releasing certain information, he would give me a reason, and the reason made sense. That is not generally the case even in civilian life when dealing with officials in a crisis. (Wong 2003, 18)

The point of this observation is not that it is easier to conceal information if the press is close, but that a bond of *trust* forms between embedded reporters and the Soldiers they cover. It is easier for the embedded reporter to see, understand, and even empathize

with the Soldier's perspective if he *trusts* the Soldier. A great deal of research has been

done on this topic (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of this research), and it is not the intent

of this thesis to focus on this issue, but it is important to understand that embedding

journalists has a powerful impact on the context that is attached to the news stories they

produce.

If the program was so beneficial, why did it end? Lacey sites money as the

primary reason.

> The reason most embeds came home as soon as major combat operations ended is
> that it was costing a fortune to keep them in Iraq. News organizations were losing
> millions covering the war, but they could not decrease their coverage in the face
> of brutal competition. However, as soon as it was safe to pull the plug, the
> accountants made them do it. Just when it became critical for the military to have
> embeds who could tell the full story in Iraq, they vanished. (Lacey 2004, 37-39)

This would seem to indicate that money was a deciding factor in ending the

embedding program in Iraq. This leads, directly, to the next question: How much does

embedding cost?

Costs specific to embedding must be separated from other costs incurred by war

coverage. During the invasion of Iraq, one huge cost, especially for 24-hour cable news

networks, was the loss of advertising revenue. Continuous live coverage of the war

makes commercial breaks difficult to sell (networks can't tell advertisers how many

advertisements they will be able to run), and the opportunities for commercial breaks

decreases significantly. According to CMR/TNS Media Intelligence, a New York firm

that monitors advertising, ad revenues for entertainment cable stations saw huge

increases, while revenues for cable news networks dropped to almost nothing during the

first four weeks of the war (Hartlaub 2003). However, these pressures have a greater

influence on the amount of coverage the war received in "The Media" than on how the war was covered.

Pinning down a dollar figure for the cost of embedding is difficult, but one can make some educated guesses. According to the International Press Institute, the sums of money required were vast.

> Reporters collated their reports to send them via satellite trucks in the desert. The latest video phones, capable of providing high-quality digital images, were made available to reporters. The list of equipment used to cover the war was vast - bullet-proof vests, armoured land rovers, self-inoculation kits, chemical and biological warfare suits, Kevlar helmets, gas masks and even generators were all part of the inventory. CNN sent 500 people on hostile-environment courses costing 2,500 GBP per head. SKY spent 500,000 GBP on similar training and equipment. Both SKY and the BBC revealed that their budget for covering the war was "several millions." CNN was rumoured to have invested $1 billion in reporting on this war. It was estimated that the media would be carrying around $15 million in cash to pay its way to Baghdad. (Leaper 2006)

Between the loss of advertising dollars and the expense of one day of covering the war, media outlets were eager to reduce costs and transition to a more "regular" method of covering the war. As audience size decreased, a corresponding decrease in the amount of resources dedicated to war coverage occurred.

The "regular" system that arose from this desire is the one described throughout this chapter thus far. Once "major combat ended" media agencies sent in bureau chiefs who specialize in "initial entry" (establishing regional bureaus where none previously existed). This involved finding sites, hiring life support personnel, procuring vehicles, and providing for security. War coverage continued while this process took place, using a gradually diminishing form of the embedded media apparatus that had covered the initial invasion. Once the bureaus were established, new, bureau chiefs took over, and reporters began producing stories from inside the bureau. Meanwhile, a continuous "position

improvement" took place, whereby the systems of each regional bureau were continuously revised and improved (McWethy 2006).

This identifies the primary interest of the media outlets identified (balance cost versus audience size), but what about the other actors identified in the media system? What interests drive their actions in the media system?

Reporters

Perhaps the most controversial actors in the media system are reporters. It seems every other actor in the system has an opinion about reporters. Americans are most familiar with the accusations of "liberal media bias" from the right of the political spectrum. Mort Zuckerman, in an editorial, identified the tendency to "blame the media for failing to cover the 'good news' in Iraq and focusing instead on the bad" (Zuckerman 2006, 76). Author Frank Schaeffer is angry that "the prominence of stories about military malfeasance, absent stories about military heroism, creates an out-of-whack impression" (Schaeffer 2006). *Kansas City Star* editor E. Thomas McClanahan writes "the message of the daily news coverage--which serves up an unremitting chronicle of failure and death--wrongly assumes the worst is inevitable" (2006, B-9).

But it might surprise Americans to find out that al-Qaeda is not much more satisfied with the coverage than are Americans. Zawahiri, in his famous message to Zarqawi, refers to media coverage of the war as "the malicious, perfidious, and fallacious campaign by the deceptive and fabricated media" (ODNI 2005). It appears that the media is an equal-opportunity offender.

This study will not delve into the question of media bias. It is ultimately impossible to prove and tangential to the question of how to influence the media system.

For the purposes of the remainder of this discussion, this thesis will simply concede that

reporters, being human, have their own views about the war in Iraq, which we will call a

"message," but that it is not a primary interest when covering the war.

So, what does motivate reporters? It would appear that accurately communicating

the events in Iraq to the American people is their primary desire. Of covering the *other*

side of the Abu Ghraib story, Jackie Spinner, in her book, said:

> Despite the scandal, a lot of Soldiers in Iraq *were* trying to do the right thing.
> Those guarding the detainees by the summer of 2004 were being maligned along
> with the seven Soldiers charged with abuse. It was only fair to write about their
> struggle to maintain order in the camps. (2006, 57)

Spinner was trying her best to tell both sides of the story. John Burns, Baghdad

bureau chief for the *New York Times* observes, "In this profession, we are not paid to be

neutral. We are paid to be fair, and they are completely different things" (Katovsky 2003,

155-164). It seems that the primary interest of reporters in Iraq is accuracy, even if

"message" *does*, to some extent color their reporting.

Stringers

Perhaps the most difficult actors in the media system to "pin down" are stringers.

By their nature, they are not the public face of the media. Rather, they "feed the beast" by

providing pictures and data to media outlets and reporters. The largest companies, like

Reuters, actually profess their motivations publicly. According the Reuters website, their

goal is "…to be the information company our customers value most, by offering

indispensable content, innovative trading services and great customer service" (Reuters,

"About Us," 2006). But almost no documentation is available about the operations or

motivations of freelance journalists in Iraq. The public face of their actions is only the

pictures and data that are included in news stories, by reporters, for media outlets. One is forced to draw inferences about their motivations from their actions.

In a discussion, earlier, about the process by which stringer materials enter news stories, it was identified that some materials are transmitted directly to media outlet headquarters outside of the operational area, while other pictures and data go directly to regional bureaus. "Stringers," as a collective entity in the media system (admittedly an artificial construct, as they are many people and companies, doing the same thing, independently), have two masters: media outlets and reporters. Ultimately, they are paid by media outlets, even if working at the direction of reporters, so it would make sense that they would share the interests of media outlets more than those of reporters. But they must also take into account the interests of reporters, as their products support the construction of news stories. So, for the purposes of this thesis, the inference will be made that the primary concern of stringers is giving media outlets what they want, that which attracts audiences at minimal cost. But they also strive for accuracy, the primary concern of reporters.

The Enemy

Perhaps the simplest to answer is the interests of the enemy. At the beginning of the chapter, the Zawahiri-Zarqawi letter was sited as indicating that the enemy wishes to use the media to attack the will of the American public (ODNI 2005). This view of their aims seems to be supported by US military doctrine. The FM 1-02, *Operational Terms and Graphics*, defines terrorism as follows.

> Terrorism. (DOD) The calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or

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societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological. (2004, 1-187)

It is the very underpinning of the US military's understanding of the enemy, that he is "message-focused" (e.g., that his actions are all intended to communicate a message to his target audience). Thus, the enemy's interests in the media system revolve around its ability to transmit its message.

The US Military

The US military is interested in accurately portraying events in the operational area to the American public. The opening chapter of JP 3-61, *Public Affairs* has the following to say about accuracy:

> **The media will report on military operations regardless of accessibility.** It is incumbent upon JFCs and their PAOs to accommodate the media whenever possible for three basic reasons. First, to disseminate accurate and timely information to the public. Second, to ensure the media doesn't disseminate inaccurate information as a result of the command's failure to communicate. Third, to counter adversary propaganda and erroneous information in the adversary's press. A commander's messages to the various publics must be timely, accurate, and project the purpose and scope of the mission. (2005, I-2)

It is the foundational belief of public affairs doctrine that the truth will always favor the US military. But, lest one think that the US military has no concern as to the perception of it by the American public, there is this from JP 3-13, *Information Operations,*

> PA and IO must be coordinated and synchronized to ensure consistent themes and messages are communicated to avoid credibility losses... While intents differ, PA and IO ultimately support the dissemination of information, themes, and messages adapted to their audiences. (2006, II-8)

The US military has as much interest in using the media to transmit its message as the enemy does.

Figure 8 summarizes the interests of all of the actors in the media system in an operational area below.
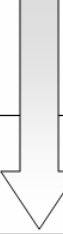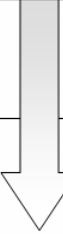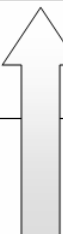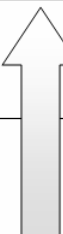
Interests	Media Outlets	Stringers	Reporters	Enemy	US
Cost vs. Entertainment	↕	↓			
Accuracy		↓	↓		↑
Message			↓	↕	↑

Figure 8.   Actors and Their Interests

In light of these identified interests, it should now be possible to identify why the US military is not, currently, habitually able to defeat the enemy's capability to use the media to influence the American public. Earlier (see figure 5), it was identified that the US military currently tries to influence news stories by effecting pictures and events. It is now possible to explain why these techniques have not been effective.

Why Providing Pictures Is Not Effective

In figure 6, it was identified that four of the five actors on the media system, stringers, reporters, the enemy, and the US military, all acted as collectors in the collection phase of the media system. Obviously, reporters and stringers do collection, but the enemy and US military do collection as well. The enemy provides video like that

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provided in the beheading of Nick Berg. The US provides video and stills through

websites and DVIDS to regional bureaus and media outlet headquarters outside the

operational area. Examining these "collectors" in light of their interests, one can draw

some conclusions about how these interests impact the pictures and data they produce.

This analysis is shown in figure 9.
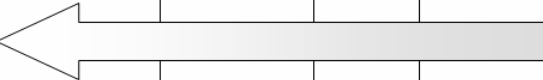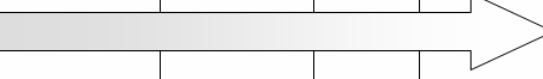
Interests	Reporters	Stringers	US	Enemy
Cost vs. Entertainment				
Accuracy				
Message	2	1	3	4

Figure 9.   Collectors and Their Interests

In this figure, the arrows tend from more desirable to a given interest to less

desirable. For instance, from the perspective of balancing cost versus entertainment (the

primary concern of the media outlets) the enemy-produced pictures and data are most

desirable (they cost the outlet nothing and are always the most dramatic pictures and

information). However, from a perspective of accuracy (the reporters' primary concern)

reporter data is best, while enemy pictures and data are worst. From the perspective

"message" (e.g., which products are most influenced by message), again, the enemy

products are worst (most slanted) but the stringer products are best (least tainted by message).

Reporters as collectors are very expensive. First, it costs a lot for a media agency to *have* a reporter in the operational area. This is dangerous duty and reporters expect to be well compensated for these risks. Because of the risk, senior reporters do not frequently travel to Iraq. Instead, junior reporters, eager to "make their mark" in the industry, volunteer for the assignment. Because reporters are so expensive, there are very few of them in Iraq. In addition to producing news stories for there media outlets, these reporters must answer the requirements of media outlets in the 24-hour world: participating in 'blogs and chat rooms and doing "stand ups" (live television interviews with anchors in the US) for shows at all hours of the day (McWethy 2006).

Security also makes collection by reporters expensive. It is very difficult to coordinate the travel of reporters outside of their regional bureaus. It requires a great deal of planning and large number of security personnel (Spinner 2006, xi-xv). The net effect of these factors is that it is very difficult for reporters to even get out of their regional bureaus to do collection of pictures and data.

Media outlets (and their physical manifestations in the operational area, the regional bureaus) decide which pictures and data are used for stories. Regional bureaus are populated by representatives of the media outlet (bureau chiefs) and the reporters that work for that media outlet. Both the media outlets and reporters, thus, have an influence on which products are used. These products, therefore, represent the primary interests of these two entities: cost versus entertainment value and accuracy. Pictures and data collected by reporters are most accurate, but are also most expensive. The US and enemy

provided products answer are least expensive, but are least accurate. The products (pictures and data) provided by stringers, best answer the interests of both cost and accuracy. This explains why the US military is not successful in influencing the media using pictures.

This is not to say that US military and enemy products are never used. A prime example is the beheading of Nick Berg. The *only* pictures available were those produced by the enemy. Returning to the model for the media system, the media outlets decide what percentage of the media "space" will be taken up by a story. That space *must* be filled. But, given a choice, media outlets and reporters prefer stringer pictures to those produced by the US military or the enemy.

Why Generating Events Is Not Effective

Figure 5, earlier, also identified that the US military tries to create events in order to influence news stories. Why has this not been successful in defeating the enemy's ability to use the media to attack the American public's will to fight? To answer this question, it is important to look at the interests of each actor in the media system, and what events appeal most to them. For the purpose of this analysis, five potential events will be examined:

1. Car/suicide bombings, like the bombing of the ICRC, initiated by the enemy

2. Battles, such as Fallujah I, which might be initiated by the US or provoked by the enemy

3. Elections, whether local, provincial, or national, in the operational area, initiated jointly by the US military and Iraqi civilians

4. Training of the Iraqi security forces, initiated by the US military

5. Building of infrastructure in the operational area, initiated by the US military

Media Outlets

Media outlets are primarily focused on cost versus entertainment value of news stories. They want to maximize audience interest while minimizing cost for production of each story. They would rank the proposed stories, in order of desirability, in the order they are listed above.

The Media Research Center, a conservative think-tank, did an analysis of news coverage from 1 January to 30 September 2005. In the study, they watched the evening news broadcasts of the "big three" network news agencies. Of 1,388 news stories about Iraq, they found that 564 of these news stories, over 40 percent, were about terrorist attacks in the operational area (Media Research Center 2006). Overwhelmingly, this is the preferred story for media outlets.

The reason seems to be cost. It costs almost nothing to cover a car bombing. No intelligence gathering is required. The explosion is heard everywhere, and the collector need only go to the sound. Covering the event does not even require a trained freelance journalist. Anyone with a camera and a notepad can collect pictures and data from the event.

The other half of this calculation is grimmer. If the main interest of media outlets is cost versus entertainment value, they must perceive that their audience is very interested in terrorist attacks (if we translate "entertainment" to mean "something viewers want to watch/readers want to read about"). This perception seems to be confirmed by a number of journalists. The old news adage is "if it bleeds, it leads." This grim observation is confirmed, apologetically, by Jackie Spinner. She uses the analogy of a situation where

the violence in Baghdad was, instead, occurring in New York City. She says, "The bulk of the coverage--and in my mind, the heart of journalistic responsibility--would be writing about the terror, the horror in the Bronx and Manhattan and Queens" (Spinner 2006, 77).

If gore serves the interest of media outlets, why wouldn't they "score" battles higher in their order of precedence for desired news stories? The answer goes back to money. Covering individual battles would incur many of the same costs associated with embedding reporters during the initial invasion of Iraq. The cost of broadcasting from a remote location, the cost of equipment and vehicles, and the potential and real cost (in pay) of putting reporters in harms way all make this event less desirable.

The remaining stories on the list of potential events are all of less interest to media outlets because they perceive them to be of less interest to the American public, their audience. Returning to the Media Research Center's analysis, there were only 92 (of 1,388 total stories) about the Iraqi political process (Media Research Center 2006). This low number during the surveyed period was despite the national election of a transitional Iraqi government on 30 January 2005 and the impending national constitutional referendum which occurred in October of 2006 (US Department of State 2006). In the same survey, training of Iraqi security forces garnered only 105 stories, while rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure was mentioned in only 21 total stories (Media Research Center 2006). Terrorism dominates news coverage of the war.

Stringers

Stringers, by their nature, exist to provide pictures and data to reporters and media outlets. There is no good documentation on what the wants and desires of freelance

journalists or news agencies are in Iraq. But, as their survival depends on the purchasing of their products by media outlets, one must assume that their desires are very closely aligned with media outlets. For the purposes of this study, this assumption will, by necessity, be made.

Reporters

Being employees of media outlets, reporters' interests are also closely aligned with media outlets, with one important distinction: reports like to cover battles. As mentioned earlier, young reporters work in Iraq to "make a name" for themselves. The quickest way to make a name for oneself is dramatic coverage at the battlefront (McWethy 2006). Mundane stories about the electricity in Baghdad or the Iraqi political process just are not as effective in this regard.

But it is not only junior journalists that are attracted to the allure of the battlefield. Maya Zumwalt, Fox News producer and reporter, said of her decision to be an embed in the invasion of Iraq, "I was drawn to cover this war as an embed because I grew up on [my relatives'] stories from Vietnam. I have always been curious about what war is like and what combat must have been like for them" (Katovsky 2003, 347-352).

US Military

US Military organizations use themes and messages to create effects on the battlefield. Iraq is no different. In order to have the desired effect in Iraq (create stability, neutralize the enemy, and support the government of Iraq) they use the media to transmit these themes. Of course, for reasons of operational security, units do not publish their themes and messages, but this deliberate crafting of a unit's media message does occur.

In the 1st Infantry Division, in 2004, this effort was coordinated by the Joint Fires and Effects Coordinator, COL Longo. In an article written after their deployment, he explains, "The JFEC . . . ensures the themes and messages articulated . . . are nested with those published in the ETO [effects tasking order]" (Longo 2005, 18-21).

These themes are not published, but one can infer the themes and messages from the products produced by public affairs organizations in the operational area. Returning to the list examined before, of the "Featured Stories" at the MNF-I website, we can discern some trends:

Majority of Iraqi Police Trained and Equipped
Iraqi army engineers teach weapons training to U.S. Soldiers
Australian troops take on new role
Family reunions help healing process
Engineer: 'Helping kids the best part'
MND-B Soldiers distribute humanitarian aid (MNF-I, "Featured Stories," 2006)

There are two stories about training Iraqi security forces, and it appears, two more stories about the infrastructure. These are almost certainly themes for MNF-I during this period (August 2006). A look at the "Commanding General's Column" from October 2005 to September 2006 shows 8 stories that focus, primarily, on the Iraqi political process. The political progress of Iraq is almost certainly another theme of MNF-I (MNF-I, "Commanding General's Column," 2006). It would appear that, based on the US military's primary interest in the media system, communicating its message to the American public and the world, it would rank the listed events in the opposite order listed above. Events about building infrastructure and training the military are much more preferred by the US military than battles and car bombs.

The Enemy

The enemy does not publish its messages and themes either. One is, again, forced to look to the events they generate to determine which events they prefer. Just reviewing the list of events discussed in this chapter, the enemy generated three terrorist attacks (the attack on the Al-Rasheed Hotel, the bombing of the ICRC, and the beheading of Nick Berg were all terrorist attacks. The attack on the Blackwater contractors was intended to provoke a disproportionate response, a battle, from the US military. Battles, which kill a lot of insurgents, are more costly to the enemy than bombings, which usually kill only one. Thus, it would appear, that the enemy might rank the events just as they are listed at the beginning of this discussion, with car bombings and battles most desired and any signs of progress (like elections, training the military, or building infrastructure) least desired.

Table 1 summarizes this analysis graphically. For each actor, the events are ranked from most preferred (1) to least preferred (5).

Table 1.   Actors and Their Desired Events

Events	Media Outlets	Stringers	Reporters	Enemy	US
Car / Suicide Bombs	1	1	2	1	5
Battles	2	2	1	2	4
Elections	3	3	3	3	3
Training Military	4	4	4	4	2
Building Infrastructure	5	5	5	5	1

The contrast is stark. Every actor in the media system, based on their interests, agrees (with the caveat that reporters would prefer battles to car/suicide bombings) on which events are most preferred *except* the US military.

The US military and war supporters are often heard to say that the media only reports the bad news. Iraq veteran and cofounder of "Vets for Freedom," Wade Zirkle, says of war coverage, "However, for many of us who have recently returned from Iraq, we view much of the media coverage the same way as someone who has read a novel and compares it with its film adaptation: the movie is usually dramatic and sensational, but often not loyal to the integrity of the book's storyline." (2006)

The US military is intensely interested in getting out news about the "good" events. But no one else in the media system is. One should not be surprised that the "bad" news dominates the headlines.

Having examined both the enemy capability to manipulate the media and the media itself, it is finally time to examine the US military. Is the US military capable of defeating this capability?

Secondary Question: What is US military capability and doctrine for countering the enemy's capability?

Reading this chapter to this point, one might conclude the answer is "No." But the US military has had successes in influencing the media. The following discussion will seek to capture techniques that *are* successful in defeating the enemy's capability. Once these techniques are identified, the discussion will turn to answering the question of why the techniques are not being employed habitually.

<u>Tertiary Question: Does the US military *have* the capability to defeat this enemy capability?</u>

The battle, which became known as Fallujah II, began four days after the presidential election, with Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi's order to attack the city. From a media perspective, a great deal had been done to "lay the groundwork" for this attack prior to this declaration. The Prime Minister had shut down Al Jazeera's operations in Iraq in August, which had had a dampening effect on much of the pro-insurgent press in the operational area. GEN Casey, the MNF-I commander, had ordered a British battalion from Basra to guard the road leading out of Fallujah, silencing much of the coalition "back-biting" that had occurred for "Fallujah I" (West 2005, 256-262). MNF-I also supported the fight by providing 2 public affairs journalists (one Army and one Marine) and 1 PAO (public affairs officer), a Navy lieutenant (Boylan 2006) to I MEF (Marine Expeditionary Force).

The insurgents had prepared the "media battlefield" as well. To demonstrate their readiness to the world, the insurgents invited in reporters from Arab networks to cover their preparations and the actual battle (West 2005, 256-262).

LTG Stattler, the I MEF commander, was the ground commander for the battle. He did quite a bit of preparation himself. In an interview after the battle, he had the following to say about "setting the conditions" for the media fight:

> IO [information operations] was *huge* in setting the conditions so that the international community, Muslim world, and our own US citizens understood why this fight had to be fought, understood that the Prime Minister had asked us to go in and clean out Fallujah. (Hollis 2006, 5)

The I MEF staff requested 70 embedded reporters for the operation. MNF-I had a mountain of requests from media outlets to embed in preparation for the fight. The final number would be 92 embeds (Boylan 2006).

Also, in the opening evening of the offensive, on 7 November 2006, one of the initial targets was the Fallujah hospital. In Fallujah I, this had been a key media-influencing asset for the insurgents, as every wounded person, civilian or insurgent, became proof of the "heavy handed Americans" assault on Islam (Hollis 2006). This was a combat, maneuver mission, intended, specifically, to achieve a media effect. One would struggle to find another example of this in the history of the US military. The mission had the desired effect: the enemy was unable to use the hospital as a tool to influence news stories about the battle.

Other maneuver decisions were made in order to support desired media effects. Iraqi battalions accompanied their US counterparts and took the lead in searching mosques (West 2005, 256-262). An integrated plan for post-battle reconstruction and reopening of the city was developed before the fight, so that the media would see Iraqis returning to rebuilt, functional neighborhoods, rather than bombed out rubble (Hollis 2006, 4-9). The perception of wanton violence and destruction had halted the offensive in Fallujah I. But far more destruction happened in Fallujah II. 18,000 buildings were damaged in Fallujah II, vice only 70-100 in Fallujah I (West 2005, 256-262). The difference was the perception of the operation by the US public and the world, as created by the efforts of I MEF to fight in the "media battlespace."

All was not perfect. Perhaps the most dramatic incident of "IO fratricide" was the incident in which a marine shot a wounded insurgent in front of an embedded media

crew. A marine from India Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, believing the Iraqi was feigning death for some nefarious reason, shot the marine in full view of the camera. The video traveled around the world at the speed of light. Al Jazeera showed the shooting hourly (West 2005, 314-316). But even the impact of this incident was minimal. LTG Sattler had prior knowledge that the tape would be released, and was able to provide immediate, on air comment to accompany the story: "Let me make it perfectly clear: we follow the law of armed conflict and we hold ourselves to a high standard of accountability." Because of the reports sent back to media outlets by embedded reporters, on air discussions of the shooting had needed context as well. BG James Marks (retired), an analyst for CNN, when asked about the incident on-air said, "A buddy the day before had been killed in a very similar incident where an insurgent who was playing dead had, in fact, been booby trapped and a number of Marines had been injured and wounded and one Marine was killed, so you keep all of that in context" (CNN, "U.S. and Iraqi Forces Take Fallujah," 2006). This added context would have never been possible without the extraordinary number of embeds present for the fight.

Did all of this effort work? From the perspective of outcome, Fallujah II obviously went better than Fallujah I. The US military was successful in retaking the city and defeating the insurgents holding it. This effort paved the way for successful elections- of a temporary government to oversee the production of a constitution. Operationally, the fight was a success.

Did the detailed integration of media management into the operational planning and execution for Fallujah II have an impact on the American public's perceptions about the war in Iraq? The answer to this question is less clear. According to a USA

Today/Gallup Poll, in answer to the question, "In view of the developments since we first sent our troops to Iraq, do you think the US made a mistake in sending troops to Iraq, or not," opinion did not change much before and after the battle. 52 percent of respondents said the US "Did not make a mistake" before the battle, while 51 percent said the same afterward (with a 3 percent margin of error, statistically, this represents no change). Asking a similar question, the ABC News/*Washington Post* Poll found a slip from 56 percent to 52 percent in support for the war (PollingReport.com 2006). These results do not seem conclusive until you compare them to the double-digit drop in support for the war after Fallujah I. The US military fared much better after the second battle of Fallujah.

What changed? What did the US military do differently in Fallujah II that it had not done in Fallujah I? Quite simply, they controlled access. They did not control it by barring the entry of journalists. They controlled it by *facilitating* journalists. Practically everyone who wanted to embed was allowed to embed, including "hostile" Arab press (Boylan 2006). The voracious media hunger to report the story was fed by good, on the scene reporting. This completely drowned out the enemy's efforts to provide pictures. Insurgents produced video (probably from the first battle of Fallujah) purporting to show old people and children being pulled out of rubbled buildings. But, because reporters were on the scene, collecting more dramatic battlefield footage, the pictures got almost no air time in the American or world press (West 2006, 322-323).

The US military influenced the story in other ways as well. They produced dramatic pictures of insurgent activities in the city, issued a press release by the Department of Defense after the battle (on 5 December 2004). The US military consolidated photos of torture chambers, weapons caches, and bomb-making factories, all

of which was intended to justify the offensive (GlobalTerrorAlert.com 2006). They also generated the event. This offensive was not instigated by an insurgent attack, but rather initiated at the time and place of the US military's choosing. The entire approach is shown graphically, in figure 10.

NEWS STORY	Methods	Enemy	US
PICTURES	Video, stills	X	X
DATA	Lying, hiding, spinning	X	
CONTEXT	Events	X	X
	Access	X	X

Figure 10. News Stories and US/Enemy Influence (Fallujah II)

One question remains: Does this method translate to the "steady-state" counter-insurgency operations that dominate the war in Iraq? After all, the two battles of Fallujah were high-intensity "spikes" in an otherwise low-intensity conflict. To answer this question, a brief examination of the experiences of 1st Infantry Division in Samarra, during this same time period, might be helpful.

Samarra, while not to the degree of Falllujah, was a hotbed of Sunni insurgency. In preparation for elections, and in order to provide a "Sunni victory" to kick off the offensive to deny Sunni insurgents safe havens which would culminate in Fallujah II, the Interim Iraqi Government (IIG) ordered the capture of Samarra on 1 October 2004. The

1st Infantry Division, under the command of MG Batiste, would complete this mission in just over two days, killing over 125 insurgents, and capturing 128. But this was only the opening chapter of Operation Baton Rouge, which would seek to neutralize insurgent influence in the city and bring the people of Samarra into the political process (Batiste 2005, 13-21). That phase of the operation is very much exemplary of the operations that are going on all over Iraq every day.

By necessity, the 1st Infantry Division *did* generate the events in Samarra. From the initial, "kinetic" operation, through the meetings with political leaders, to the national election, and beyond, US military forces were "setting the agenda" for what happened in the city. However, MG Batiste identifies many efforts which were even more important in influencing the media coverage of operations in the city. First, he identifies a process the division referred to as "IO counterfire." The division would immediately react to enemy attempts to use false or misleading pictures and data of events in the city by using an "IO/PSYOP/PA battle drill" to generate accurate pictures, data, and "talking points" about the event (Batiste 2005, 13-21).

But, even more interestingly, MG Batiste identifies that *facilitating access* to stories in the city was an effective method of influencing media coverage about the operation. As part of the "IO/PSYOPS/PA battle drill" described above, media would be transported to the scene of incidents whenever possible, to cover the story personally, seeing the site and the event for themselves. Embedding was also an important part of this strategy. MG Batiste said:

> [The division] encouraged leaders and Soldiers to talk to the press and routinely embedded journalist and reporters with units. "Embeds" from major news networks and print media proved invaluable during Operation Baton Rouge.

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Embedded reporters gained a perspective on the situation in the division's AO that was impossible to obtain in Baghdad. On many occasions, journalists commented they had been unaware that so much was happening in the AO until they were embedded with units. Reporters embedded with units... gained an appreciation for CF and ISF accomplishments, the difficulties inherent in restoring Iraqi control to Samarra and moving the city forward. (2005, 16-17)

Embedding gave the media a perspective on operations in Samarra that had a direct influence on the context they attached to completed news stories.

Examination of Fallujah II and Samarra has identified a number of successful techniques for defeating the enemy's capability to use the media to erode the will of the American people.

1. Make maneuver decisions to support objectives in the media battlespace

2. Facilitate media coverage of events in the operational area

3. Respond immediately to enemy media attacks

Why then, does the US military not, habitually use these techniques?

Tertiary Question: What is the current doctrine on military-media relations, information operations, and public affairs operations?

If the US military is *capable* of defeating the enemy's ability to use the media to influence the American public, but is it habitually failing to do so? Accepting the definition for doctrine posited in Chapter 1, that it is "principles by which the military forces . . . guide their actions in support of national objectives" (FM 1-02 2004, 1-65), if the US military has the capability, the answer must be that its doctrine is not "guiding" it to use that capability.

The Public Affairs "Firewall"

A key element of the doctrinal "disconnect" appears to be the forced separation of

IO (information operations) and PA (public affairs). One need look no further than the

joint (and Army) definition of information operations to see this problem.

> The integrated employment of the core capabilities of Electronic Warfare,
> Computer Network Operations, PSYOP, Military Deception, and Operations
> Security, in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities,to influence,
> disrupt, corrupt or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while
> protecting our own. (JP 3-13 2006, GL-9)

The JP 3-13, as sited earlier in this chapter, does go on to describe coordination

between IO and PA, but it does not identify public affairs as a vital "core capability" of

information operations.

LTG Metz commanded MNC-I (Multi-National Corps-Iraq) from May 2004 to

May 2005. He articulated this problem by saying, "We are not consistently achieving

synergy and mass in our strategic communications (consisting of IO, public affairs,

public diplomacy, and military diplomacy) from the strategic to the tactical level." As a

solution, he feels that "commanders at all echelons must, at present, serve as the bridge

across the doctrinal gap between IO and PA in order to synchronize efforts in the

information domain." The problem, as he sees it, is a doctrinal "firewall" between

information operations and public affairs (Metz 2006, 9).

To some extent, these firewalls seem to be intentional. Looking at the declassified

portions of the *Information Operations Roadmap*, there is one very informative

recommendation made: "The likelihood that PSYOP messages will be replayed to a much

broader audience, including the American public, requires that specific boundaries be

established for PSYOP" (DoD, *IO Roadmap*, 2003, 26).

The document then goes on to list a number of institutional separations that should be imposed on information operations to prevent IO from "bleeding over" into domestic discourse in an illegal fashion. No similar discussion is provided on how to proactively influence the American public in a legal fashion.

The main impediment seems to be that public affairs, as a community *doesn't want* to be in the information operations business. To illustrate this point, consider this selection from the current, joint publication on public affairs: "PA capabilities are related to IO, but PA is not an IO discipline or psychological operations (PSYOP) tool…. PA must be aware of the practice of PSYOP, but should have no role in planning or executing these operations." The manual goes on to describe all of the other ways in which public affairs should be kept separate from the other "IO disciplines." The sentiments of the public affairs community seem to be summed up quite well by the sidebar comment "PA and information operations entities must be aware of each other's activities for maximum effect and to achieve success" (JP 3-61 2005, xi). Public affairs sees itself as related to, but separate from information operations.

Linda Robinson, a correspondent for *US News & World Report*, had an interesting observation on this topic, based on her investigation of the Department of Defense's efforts to create an integrated media-response system.

> Another conflict arises in the effort to integrate or coordinate all the information activies under strategic communications directors in the field. This makes public-affairs oficials uneasy. Their preferred solution is to do all the integrating at senior levels in the Pentagon, where tricky policy decisions can be made. (2006, 32)

In her view, public affairs does not want to intermingle public affairs and information operations at the operational, joint force commander-level, because it will

desynchronize the message of political leaders of the military from that of operational-level leaders in the field.

Media Not Seen as an Operational Battlespace

The problem in protecting the will of the American public does not seem to be a lack of desire to do so. Based on the published doctrine of the US military, it at least recognizes the *need* to maintain the will of the American people to prosecute wars. The base publication of the US military states that need clearly.

> The opinions of the American citizenry, and of peoples elsewhere, concerning the legitimacy, appropriateness, and effectiveness of US military action have an important effect on the activities of the Armed Forces of the US. Public opinion influences the ability of the Armed Forces to accomplish their missions and to prepare for future uses of US military power. (JP 1 2000, I-5-8)

The manual then goes on to direct military leaders at all levels to be responsible to inform the public as to the activites of its military (JP 1 2000, I-5-8). Restated, US military's freedom of action in any theater of war is critically linked to public perception of its actions. The joint doctrine on public affairs is even more explicit on this linkage.

> Media coverage of potential future military operations can, to a large extent, shape public perception of the national security environment now and in the years ahead. This is true for the US public, the public in allied countries, whose opinion can affect the durability of the coalition, and publics in countries where US conducts operations, whose perceptions of the US can affect the cost and duration of our involvement. (JP 3-61 2005, III-23)

The desire to maintain public opinion is there. Why, then, is the US military not, habitually using its capabilities, described earlier in this chapter, to do so?

In part, the answer seems to be that the US military does not see this as an operational-level responsibility. The "Revision Second Draft" of the JP 3-0 co-opts the old "Principles of Military Operations Other Than War" (printed in the 1995 version of

the JP 3-07) and includes them as "Other Principles" in Appendix A, "Principles of War."

One of these principles, "perseverance" is, in part, defined as follows:

> Prepare for measured, protracted military operations in pursuit of the desired end state. Some joint operations may require years to reach the termination criteria…. The patient, resolute, and persistent pursuit of national goals and objectives often is a requirement for success. This will frequently involve diplomatic, economic, and informational measures to supplement military efforts. (JP 3-0 RSD 2005, A-4)

The definition seems to imply that the sustaining of public will is not a

responsibility of a military force in an operational area, but the function of other elements

of national power, which "supplement military efforts."
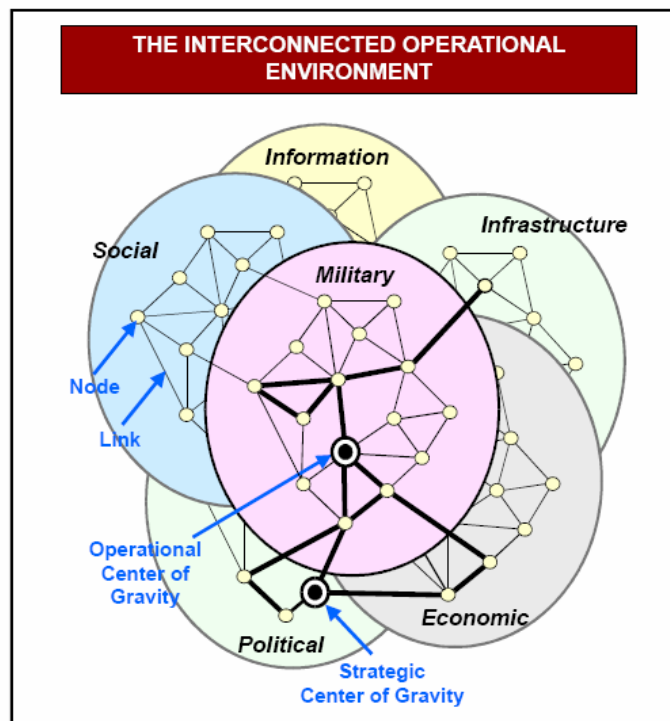
Figure 11. The PMESII Model

Source: JP 3-0 RSD 2005, IV-8.

This thinking is highlighted in figure 11. This figure is taken from the "Revision Second Draft" of JP 3-0, *Joint Operations,* but it also appears in many other manuals throughout US military doctrine. This figure describes the PMESII model, a model for "nodal analysis" of a nation's strategic and operational power. Note that it highlights a node in the political sphere as a "strategic center of gravity," and a military node as an "operational center of gravity." This model is intended to analyze an enemy force, but it is very telling about how the US military sees itself, as well. The operational level of war is the realm of the military, while the political environment is the realm of other, strategic assets of national power. It is completely foreign to the American military mind that influencing domestic politics might fall within the purview of a force in the operational area, or the military at all.

This is the most important, cultural, reason that the US military resists embedding, and other operational-level efforts to influence public opinion. But there are others as well.

Impediments to Facilitating the Media

The analysis in this chapter highlights that embedding journalists with units, and generally facilitating access to events that will generate news stories, invariably helps the US military by defeating the enemy's capability to influence the American public through the media. So, why is this not happening more frequently? The question of why media outlets stopped embedding with the US military after the end of the ground war (cost) was answered earlier in this chapter. But the military discourages it as well. The military resists the embedding of correspondents with military units because of a number of intuitional and cultural impediments.

There is almost no doctrinal basis for embedding. Embedding was directed by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) before the invasion of Iraq (Katovsky 2006, xiii). It was never intended to be a permanent solution to public affairs, but rather an arrangement to last for the duration of what was expected to be a short war. The establishing document from the OSD made no mention of a termination date for its "Public Affairs Guidance," but the tone certainly indicates that there was no intent that it would be permanent (OSD, "Public Affairs Guidance," 2003).

Embedding is only beginning to be introduced into doctrine. The 2005 edition of the joint public affairs doctrine includes the words "embed," "embedded," and "embedding" only a little over a dozen times, and speaks on the topic only in terms of credentialing them, and as a bullet under "Planning Considerations." There is no discussion of how to decide which unit receives embeds, which journalists are embedded, or what unit responsibilities should be (JP 3-61 2005, iii). This is the entirety of the US military doctrine on embedding. As such, the US military has had to "figure it out as it goes," deciding what rules and techniques it will use as the war continues.

Deborah Howell, ombudsman for the *Washington Post* identified one key impediment to embedding. Her sources, COL David Lapan (Marine), former PAO for I MEF in Fallujah, and LTC Barry Johnson, "embed manager" at the CPIC (combined press information center) in Baghdad, both told her that they strongly support embedding, but "cannot force it on commanders (Robinson 2006, 32). This is confirmed by LTC Boylan, former director of CPIC (2006). Embedding is *voluntary* for units in the field. They are no longer forced to embed journalists if they do not want to.

LTC Boylan also identifies another impediment: the US military only *offers* embedding when it wants the story covered (2006). This thesis highlighted, earlier, that the US military is not very successful in generating "media events." The US military's desired events are in complete contrast to the desired events of every other actor in the media system. The US military, it seems, only offers to embed when one of *its* desired events is occurring. The result is that many offers to embed are not accepted by already stretched regional bureaus. If they are accepted, media pools are formed, consisting mostly of stringers, who go and get pictures and data about the event that all of the regional bureaus share (McWethy 2006).

There is also a financial impediment to facilitating the media. The US military actually *charges* media outlets for major costs due to facilitating the media. When press members travel to Iraq, media outlets are frequently charged for the travel. Special exceptions are made for small, hometown newspapers and television stations. But major networks are forced to pay for facilitation they receive from the military. For senior reporters to travel with the Secretary of Defense, media outlets are actually charged first class airfare rates for the travel. As a result, travel to and from the operational area has become one of the biggest costs for media outlets to cover the war in Iraq (McWethy 2006). After nearly a year of research, this study has been able to uncover no statutory reason for this practice. It seems the practice has simply arisen out of tradition, based on precedents set by years of uneasy relations between the military and the media.

Another, more controversial reason that embedding may not be common is that the US military is *selective* about who they will embed. Rod Norland served as

Newsweek's Baghdad bureau chief for two years. In an interview with

ForeignPolicy.com, he said:

> But the military has started censoring many [embedded reporting] arrangements.
> Before a journalist is allowed to go on an embed now, [the military] check[s] the
> work you have done previously. They want to know your slant on a story--they
> use the word slant--what you intend to write, and what you have written from
> embed trips before. If they don't like what you have done before, they refuse to
> take you. There are cases where individual reporters have been blacklisted
> because the military wasn't happy with the work they had done on embed.
> (ForeignPolicy.com 2006)

Such charges are very difficult to confirm. However, in an interview, Steven

Komarow, Assistant International Editor for the Associated Press, seemed to elude to the

same phenomenon when he said, "The military's effort to steer news coverage also

hampers coverage" (2006). It may, indeed, be the case that the US military, in its desire

to manage the media, is discriminating between reporters based on perceived political

bias.

The Military Culture

Finally, there is simply a cultural animus between the military and the media.

Nearly every embed who has written on their experience in Operation Iraqi Freedom

describes the initial mistrust between themselves and the unit with which they are

embedded (Katovsky 2005, xii-xvii). The roots of this mistrust are beyond the scope of

this thesis, but the existence of this phenomenon is well documented.

A separate, but related phenomenon is the tendency toward OPSEC (operational

security) and away from the free flow of information. OPSEC is actually a "core

capability" of information operations, while public affairs considers itself completely

separate from IO (JP 3-13 2006). Frustration with the glacial pace of information release

from US military headquarters is universal. According to Steven Komarow, "Routine information is very slow to emerge, apparently because it must be okayed at many levels" (Komarow 2006). Jim Lacey complained that despite his many positive stories on the US military and his status as a reserve officer, he had to hound PAOs for any information at all to cover stories. He finally "re-embedded" with the 101st Airborne Division out of sheer frustration (Lacey 2004, 37-39). The Office of the Secretary of Defense tacitly recognized this tendency when they published their "Public Affairs Guidance" prior to the beginning of the invasion of Iraq. Military units were told to ask "why not release," vice the default question "why release" (OSD, "Public Affairs Guidance," 2003). The US military is not *structured* to facilitate the media or the free flow of information.

This chapter has identified and defined the enemy capability and the threat it poses. It has analyzed the media system, how it operates, and why. Finally, this chapter has looked at the US military's capability to defeat the enemy's media-manipulating capability, and doctrinal reasons it is not being uniformly used. The next chapter will look at ways to correct this problem. What doctrinal reforms can the US military make to defeat the enemy's ability to use the media to erode the will of the American people?

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter, the thesis will first draw conclusions from the analysis in the previous chapter, then, based on these conclusions, make recommendations for changes to current US military doctrine where appropriate. Finally, this thesis will close with recommendations for areas of further research that fell outside the scope of this study, but are worthy of further examination.

Conclusions

The Research Questions

The analysis in chapter 4 has shown that the enemy does have the capability to negatively impact the will of the American people through the media, and the US military does have the capability to defeat this enemy capability. However, the analysis also shows that, to date, the US military has not been consistent in defeating the enemy's capability. Finally, the analysis has identified that there are significant doctrinal impediments that prevent the US military from consistently defeating the enemy media-manipulation capability. Table 1 summarizes these findings.

Table 2.   Research Questions

What is the enemy capability?	
Does the enemy have the ability to exploit world media to attack the American public's will to prosecute the war?	Yes.
What is the mechanism by which the enemy's tactical attacks are translated into changes in public opinion through the media?	The enemy operates at the event and collection level of the media system, producing pictures and data, generating events, and controlling access to influence news stories about the operational area.
Does this threaten to prevent the US from achieving its strategic objectives in Iraq?	Yes.
What is the media system in Iraq?	
How does the media currently cover the war in Iraq?	Most frequently, stringers collect pictures and data, and they are combined with context by reporters at regional bureaus.
How has the media arrived at this solution?	Reporters, stringers, and media outlets, driven by their respective interests, have arrived at the solution that strikes the best balance between cost, entertainment, and accuracy.
What is US military capability and doctrine for countering the enemy's capability?	
Does the US military *have* the capability to defeat this enemy capability?	Yes.
What is the current doctrine on military-media relations, information operations, and public affairs operations?	A doctrinal separation exists between IO and PA. Media is not seen as an operational problem. There are extra-doctrinal and extra-statutory impediments to facilitating the media. A cultural tension exists between the media and the military.

Thus, the answer to the primary research question:

Primary Question: Is US joint, operational-level doctrine currently sufficient to,

when exercised, neutralize the enemy's ability to use the media to erode the will of the

American people (e.g., "defend" the US military's operational center of gravity)?

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<u>Answer</u>: No

This begs the next question: How should the US military change its doctrine in order to consistently defeat the enemy's ability to erode the will of the American people through the media?

<u>Recommendations</u>

In his work, *Doctrine Writing Handbook*, Noel L. Patejo identified a number of different doctrine-development processes from across NATO. Figure 12 shows the doctrinal process for the British Royal Air Force. Starting at the left, with inputs, one must examine theory before one can proceed to generating doctrine.
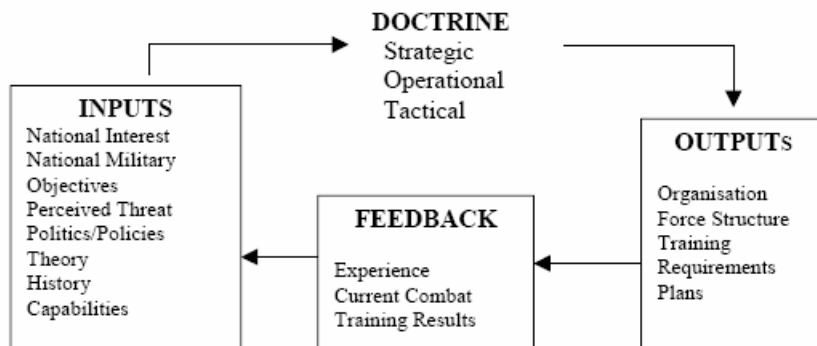

Figure 12. The Doctrine Process
Source: Patejo 1999, 11.

<u>The Theory</u>

The best way to understand the impact that the media has had on operational art is using the construct of military revolutions and revolutions in military affairs posited by Murray and Knox in *The Dynamics of Military Revolution*. According to them, "the

defining feature [of a military revolution] is that it fundamentally changes the framework

of war." But military revolutions do more than alter the military. They "recast society and

the state as well as military organizations. They alter the capacity of states to create and

project military power" (Knox 2001, 6-14).

In this construct, a "revolution in military affairs" (RMA) is a resultant or

associated lesser change in the way militaries operate, caused by a military revolution. It

is, in the estimation of Murray and Knox, a result of militaries' desperate struggle to

adapt to the changes wrought by a military revolution.

> Military organizations embark upon an RMA by devising new ways of destroying
> their opponents. To do so they must come to grips with fundamental changes in
> the social, political, and military landscapes; in some cases they must anticipate
> those changes. Revolutions in military affairs require the assembly of a complex
> mix of tactical, organization, doctrinal, and technological innovations in order to
> implement a new conceptual approach to warfare. (Knox 2001, 12)

In this construct, RMAs are not just technological. They also require a

reformation of the structure and *doctrine* of military forces. But, finally, "military

institutions that are intellectually alert can gain significant advantage" (Knox 2001, 12).

Applying this construct to today, one could say that the telecommunications

revolution is a military revolution. It has certainly "recast society and state as well as

military organizations" (Knox 2001, 7). Americans are most familiar with the changes

wrought by the internet, but information technology has brought a steady increase in the

productivity of the industrialized world for the past quarter century. Since 1973,

American manufacturing output has increased by 114 percent. In 1973, America

produced 22 percent more manufactured goods per head of population than the UK. By

2000 the difference was 91 percent (The Cambridge-MIT Institute 2006). Information

technology power has become inextricably linked to national economic power.

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In addition to the social changes caused by increased prosperity, there are the changes brought by increased interconnectivity. The world is a smaller place. Since World War II, the world has gone from FM radio and telegraph to communications satellites, global multi-media corporations, and the internet. Globalization has created a "world community" and given a global voice to those in the most remote regions of the world. Totalitarian regimes struggle to keep information out, while media organizations with global reach try to spread their products to every corner of the globe. A detailed discussion of the social and economic impacts of the telecommunications revolution is beyond the scope of this thesis, but they are legion.

What is relevant to this thesis is the impact the telecommunications revolution has had on military organizations. The US military is immediately familiar with the RMA expressed in the concept of "network-centric warfare." The Department of Defense's Office of Force Transformation gives the following answer to the question, "What is network-centric warfare?"

> Network-centric warfare is an emerging theory of war in the Information Age. It is also a concept that, at the highest level, constitutes the military's response to the Information Age. The term network-centric warfare broadly describes the combination of strategies, emerging tactics, techniques, and procedures, and organizations that a fully or even a partially networked force can employ to create a decisive warfighting advantage (DoD, *Implementation of Network-Centric Warfare*, 2005, 3).

The "governing principles" of this new "theory of war" are enumerated below:

- Fight first for *information superiority*
- Access to information: *shared awareness*
- *Speed of command* and decision making
- *Self-synchronization*
- *Dispersed forces*: non-contiguous operations
- *Demassification*
- *Deep sensor reach*

- ***Alter initial conditions*** at higher rates of change
- ***Compressed operations*** and levels of war (DoD, *Implementation of Network-Centric Warfare*, 2005, 8)

In essence, network centric warfare is doing more with less, substituting increased situational awareness and more precision capability for massed fire power.

One could argue that, rather than an RMA, this is simply an increased realization of the progress that began with the advent of the "combined arms warfare" (Knox 2001, 6-14). In other words, this is nothing new, but rather "doing old things better." The advocate of Network Centric Warfare would, in response, point to the initial invasion of Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom. A coalition of around 150,000 subdued an Army at least three times its size in only twenty-one days with only 3 percent of its casualties (Department of the Army, *On Point*, 2004, 8-12). The numbers in the first Gulf War were nearly as dramatic. This is revolutionary, at least, in degree. Small, agile, lethal forces, interconnected and synchronized over vast distances, wreak havoc on the more conventional, Soviet-era formations that lack this telecommunications capability.

But the telecommunications revolution has had spawned a second, less recognized revolution in military affairs, the one highlighted in this thesis. The enemy in Iraq is exemplary of this RMA. By skillfully utilizing the global media system, the enemy is able, with small, tactical attacks, to strike at the center of gravity of the US, the will of the American people. If one does not believe that this capability represents an RMA, they need only look to the definition sited above, from Murray and Knox. The enemy embarked on developing this capability to devise "new ways of destroying their opponents," at least in the strategic sense. The enemy assembled "a complex mix of tactical, organization, doctrinal, and technological innovations in order to implement a

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new conceptual approach to warfare." Those changes were the focus of the first secondary research question, What is the enemy capability? Chapter 4 also highlighted the bottom line: through this RMA, the enemy has been able to "gain significant advantage" (Knox 2001, 14).

The US military is just beginning to come to grips with this change in how wars are fought. They seem to struggle to find words to describe it. Rear Admiral Robert Moeller, special aide to GEN John Abizaid (CENTCOM commander) says "One of the attributes of [this] warfare is that the media [are] the terrain" (Martz 2006). LTG Metz (former commander of the Multi-National Corps-Iraq) says the following:

> I am absolutely convinced that we must approach IO in a different way and turn it from a passive warfighting discipline to a very active one. We must learn to employ aggressive IO. We cannot leave this domain for the enemy; we must fight him on this battlefield and defeat him there just as we've proven we can on conventional battlefields. (2006, 4)

Whether it is called "terrain," a "battlefield," or "battlespace," the enemy has added a new dimension to the operational level of war. In fact, thinking about this problem using a dimensional construct is a useful way to understand this RMA.

Consider the analogy of a mouse in a maze (figure 13).
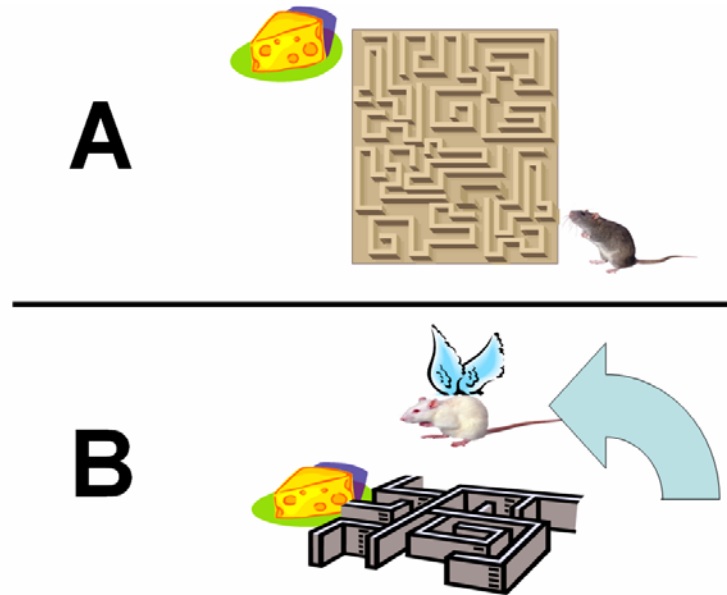
Figure 13. Degrees of Freedom

The situation in "A" is what one would expect. The problem is that the mouse wants the cheese, but the cheese is on the other side of the maze. The mouse must begin at one end of the maze and must traverse the maze, two-dimensionally, until he reaches the end of the maze and his goal. "B" considers a revolutionary change in the variables of this problem. The mouse has grown wings! Now, he no longer needs to traverse the maze to get the cheese. He can simply fly over the maze, straight to his goal. Until something is done to counter his new capability, this problem will continue to be trivial for him. He has an asymmetrical advantage.

Now, consider this same construct when applied to the current state of affairs in Operation Iraqi Freedom (figure 14).

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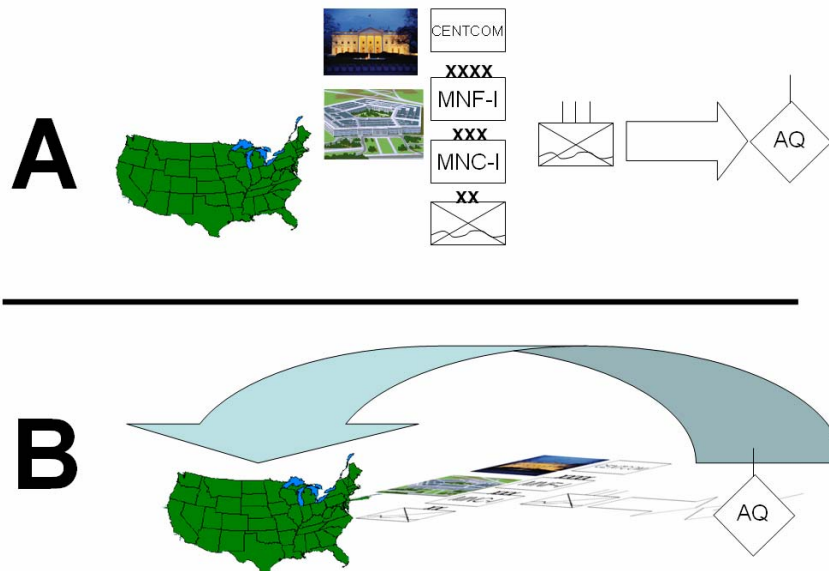
Figure 14. Media as a Degree of Freedom

The situation in "A" is very much how the American military mind is trained to see the problem (as was highlighted in the discussion about US military doctrine at the end of the previous chapter). On the left, the American people are the center of gravity of the US military (for this discussion it is irrelevant whether they are a strategic or operational center of gravity). Between the enemy on the right, and the American public on the left, there is the entire might of the US federal government and the US military, beginning with the US Department of Defense in the US and ending at the point of contact between friendly and enemy forces, at the tactical level. The problem for the enemy, from the perspective of the US military, seems insurmountable. The enemy would have to defeat the might of the most powerful military on Earth with his meager band of insurgents. To the American military mind, the enemy's efforts are doomed to failure.

Situation "B," by contrast, shows the way in which the enemy sees the battlefield. For the enemy, there is another dimension to the operational environment, one in which he has complete freedom of maneuver: the media. Using this additional degree of freedom, which his adversary lacks the ability to effectively operate in, he can directly attack their center of gravity, the will of the American people to prosecute the war. The US military thinker is correct that, in the "conventional" battlespace (represented in situation "A") the enemy is hopeless outmatched. But, in the battlespace in which the enemy operates, which includes this additional, media dimension, he has a huge, asymmetrical advantage. Just as with that flying mouse in figure 13, until something is done to counter the enemy's capability, he will continue to attack the will of the American public with impunity. History suggests (see the discussion of the Tet Offensive in Chapter 4) that, left unchecked, this will eventually force the withdrawal of the US military from Iraq.

To defeat the enemy's asymmetrical advantage, the US military must neutralize the enemy's ability to fight in this new, media dimension of the battlespace.

The Doctrine

When framed in this way, the question becomes, what doctrine should the US military adopt to respond to this revolutionary new capability. Chapter 4 highlighted three techniques that have been successful in Iraq for defeating this enemy capability:

1. Make maneuver decisions to support objectives in the media battlespace

2. Facilitate media coverage of events in the operational area

3. Respond immediately to enemy media attacks

Chapter 4 also highlighted four current doctrinal impediments to habitually using these capabilities:

1. The public affairs "firewall"

2. Media not seen as an operational battlespace

3. Impediments to facilitating the media

4. The military culture

Finally chapter 4 illustrated that actors, acting in the "Media System" act according to their interests. Any doctrinal solution must address the interests of those actors that control the system (media outlets and reports). Those interests are depicted, graphically, in figure 8 in the previous chapter, but, essentially, media outlets are primarily concerned with balancing cost versus entertainment value, while reporters are primarily interested in accuracy. With these considerations, this thesis recommends the following changes in doctrine.

The overarching principle in all of these doctrinal recommendations is that the truth favors the US military and the best way to get the truth out is to get reporters as close to the event as possible. Chapter 4 highlights this point. Proximity of reporters to an event reliably increases the incidence of news stories with context that favors the US military.

Facilitating Media Operations

Reporters are trapped in their regional bureaus because there are not many of them, and it is dangerous outside their bureaus. There are not many reporters because reporters cost a lot of money and all of the other costs of running a regional bureau compete with the cost of employing reporters. The largest costs for regional bureaus are

life support (housing and food) and security. Security is expensive because it is dangerous outside the regional bureau. One can see how these problems are all interrelated and conspire to keep reporters away from events. The US military must solve all of these problems if it is to get reporters closer to events.

Defer Costs for Media Outlets

The ideal solution is to move regional bureaus *inside* US military installations in the operational area. The US military could actually convert existing buildings in their FOBs (Forward Operating Bases) and other secure areas (like the Green Zone) into fully functional regional bureaus. Media outlets build regional bureaus "from scratch" every time they do "initial entry" into an area of regional conflict (McWethy 2006). Providing this service to media outlets would answer their cost concerns. It might answer reporters accuracy concerns because less cost bore by media outlets means they can afford more reporters in theater. It also has the added benefit of giving the US military physical control over access to the regional bureau (making it more difficult for insurgents to feed pictures and data into the media system).

The primary costs to the military in implementing this solution is the cost of providing communications (assets and bandwidth) and the cost of feeding additional personnel. But there are more significant hurdles to implementing this "heretical" solution. The first is inertia. The "Media System" described in chapter 4 has developed over three long years of war. Uprooting every regional bureau in theater and moving it into a FOB would be disruptive at best and perceived as censorship at worse. Additionally, John McWethy, former ABC News Senior Security Correspondent rejected

this solution outright, indicating that, culturally, journalists would not accept it. He felt

that it would compromise journalistic objectivity (McWethy 2006).

One might note that journalists said the same thing about the embedding program,

before, during, and after the event (Katovsky 2003, xii-xvii), yet it went forward, was

largely lauded as successful, and is considered "the solution" for future conflicts.

However, it still seems that this solution is infeasible for the current war in Iraq. It is

definitely a solution that should be considered for future wars with a projected, lengthy

stability and reconstruction component. If this is the model that the theater *begins with*,

and the media outlets accept the model before the conflict begins, it will, if embedding is

any guide, be accepted by the press.

Even if the US military cannot, feasibly, move all of the regional bureaus inside

its FOBs, it can still decrease the costs of media outlets. One method is to provide

security to regional bureaus. This does not, necessarily, mean task organizing infantry

platoons to each regional bureau in sector. It might mean simply patrolling and

"dominating the battlespace" around the regional bureau to create a secure "bubble"

around the facility. Media outlets will like this solution because it reduces their security

costs, while reporters will favor the ability to leave the regional bureaus and interact with

the local populace. In addition, it creates a perception of security in the operational area

among the media, which would, inevitable, be communicated in the news stories they

produce. It would also have the added benefit of giving the US military some physical

control of access to media bureaus, again (just as in the previous solution) making it more

difficult for insurgents to inject pictures and data into the media system.

The primary cost of this solution is in combat power. The US military will have to

dedicate forces to creating this security bubble around each regional bureau. John

McWethy reacted favorably to this less "heretical" change (McWethy 2006), suggesting

that, the media would probably accept this form of security help.

Another possible way in which the US military can defer the cost for media

outlets in covering the war is by providing free transportation from the US to the

operational area. The cost of moving personnel in and out of theater is a large percentage

of the operating budget for regional bureaus. Currently, as stated in chapter 4, the US

military frequently *charges media outlets* for no statutory or regulatory reason (McWethy

2006). Helping media outlets to defer this cost allows them to put more reporters in the

field.

Facilitate Reporters

Another area where the military can facilitate the media is by securing them and

providing transportation to cover events. The US military already does this now, but only

does so for events it wants covered (chapter 4 already includes a discussion of the futility

of trying to guide what events the media covers). As a result, the US military usually ends

up escorting a small pool of stringers who simply give pictures and data to reporters for

back-page stories. Here, this thesis suggests that this practice be expanded and reporter-

driven. The US military should secure and transport reporters to the stories the reporters

want to cover.

Finally, chapter 4 talked extensively about the benefits of embedding. This should

be a continuous practice throughout theater, with reporters embedded with units for the

longest durations possible. To persuade media outlets to do this, the military will need to

defer the costs that made this solution so expensive during the invasion of Iraq. This means providing transportation, body armor, communications equipment, and life support to embedded journalists (none of which is currently done when embedding reporters). This also means making it worth while for media outlets by embedding journalists in units that will be engaged in combat operations, the stories media outlets *and* reporters want to cover.

Both transporting and securing the media and "enhanced embedding" will answer the interests of media outlets by decreasing their security costs to get reporters close to stories, making stringers unnecessary, and increasing the entertainment value of the news stories they produce. These solutions will also answer the accuracy concerns of reporters because it will, (1) free funds for media outlets to provide more reporters to the operational area and (2) allow reporters to cover stories themselves, rather than relying on stringers.

John McWethy reacted very favorably to these ideas (McWethy 2006), again at least suggesting that, the media would accept these changes.

Protecting/Targeting Media HPTs

The US military must consider the "media value" of targets when planning combat operations, just as I MEF did when they decided to seize the hospital as the initial objective in Fallujah II (West 2005, 256-263). Consider the ICRC headquarters in Baghdad. It provided no tactical or operational advantage to either the US or enemy from a physical perspective. But, if one considered the media dimension of the battlespace, its value was incalculable. The al-Rasheed hotel was impregnable by insurgents and not considered at risk in a physical sense, but with the presence of Deputy Secretary of

Defense Wolfowitz, even an inconsequential rocket attack became a decisive operational blow to the US military. When a staff analyzes their area of operations, and considers this new, media dimension and an enemy that fights, primarily, in the media battlespace, locations and assets that have no tactical or operational significance take on new importance.

In doing the IPB (intelligence preparation of the battlefield), the US military identifies HVTs (high value targets; assets without which a force cannot achieve its objectives). Staffs should not just consider the physical value of assets and terrain. They should not just consider assets they or the enemy controls. They should consider the media impact of loss or even attack on every asset and every piece of terrain in their physical battlespace. This should then guide the development of their course of action.

Redefine the Role of Public Affairs

This thesis has shown that maintaining the support of the American public is critical to maintaining freedom of action in the operational area. Whether it is described as public affairs, media operations, protection of the public will, or some other term, the US military should seriously consider elevating operations in the media "dimension" to the level of a joint warfighting function. This means more than just adding it to a bulletized list. This means integrating operations in the media battlespace into the design of all of the US military's operations in this and future wars as completely as we do joint fires, movement and maneuver, and sustainment now. In short, the US military should embark on its own revolution in military affairs.

Public affairs must cease to be only a strategic communicator. Nor should public affairs be relegated to a "discipline" in information operations. In light of this revolution

in military affairs, the importance of the PAO (public affairs officer) to a staff should be at least as great as that of the ECOORD (effects coordinator), the J4, or any other warfighting function representative. The role of public affairs should expand to at least include the following:

1. Coordinate and synchronize the provision of resources (including combat power and logistics) to the media to facilitate coverage in the operational area.

2. Act as the representative *for* the media living and working in an operational area *to* the joint force commander.

3. Integrate with the J2 planning and execution cells to facilitate IPB (intelligence preparation of the battlefield) in assessing the media value of assets and locations in the operational area.

4. Support current operations by keeping track of where regional bureaus and reporters are in the operational area and help plan for their security.

5. Maintain an "IO Counterfire" cell to monitor and immediately respond to enemy disinformation attacks.

How to provide this emphasis is a question that force managers and senior DOD leaders must answer. Perhaps public affairs should become a branch of the Army, just as field artillery, infantry, and armor currently are. Perhaps advanced military education should include mandatory education of all military officers in this now vital discipline. James Lacey suggested advanced civil schooling for selected officers in journalism (Lacey 2004, 37-39). Methods for providing this emphasis are beyond the scope of this thesis, but the increased emphasis is needed.

Areas for Future Research

While this study has attempted to be exhaustive, there were areas that fell beyond the delimitations set at the beginning of the research process. This thesis will close by suggesting some areas where further investigation might be most productive.

First, more study is needed in defining the scope of this new media "dimension" described earlier in this chapter. Is this truly a revolution in military affairs? Is the will of the American people to prosecute the war now an operational center of gravity (rather than the traditional view of public will as a strategic center of gravity)? If this change has occurred, when did it happen and why?

Looking at the recommendations made in this thesis, especially in the area of facilitating the media, some additional questions arise as to how this might be accomplished, practically, in a military operation. When and with whom should this planning be done? Should media outlets be involved in the initial planning, prior to conflict initiation? What OPSEC concerns might this raise? Who would decide which media outlets would and would not be included, and how would they make this determination?

Finally, this thesis has only studied the "defensive" aspects of operations in the media "battlespace" (e.g., protecting the will of the American people). How does a joint force, at the operational level of war, conduct "offensive" operations in the media battlespace: attacking the will of the enemy's populace or constituency, outside the operational area, to continue to oppose the US? How does a joint force "attack" the perceptions of people *inside* the operational area? These are all topics that merit further study.

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